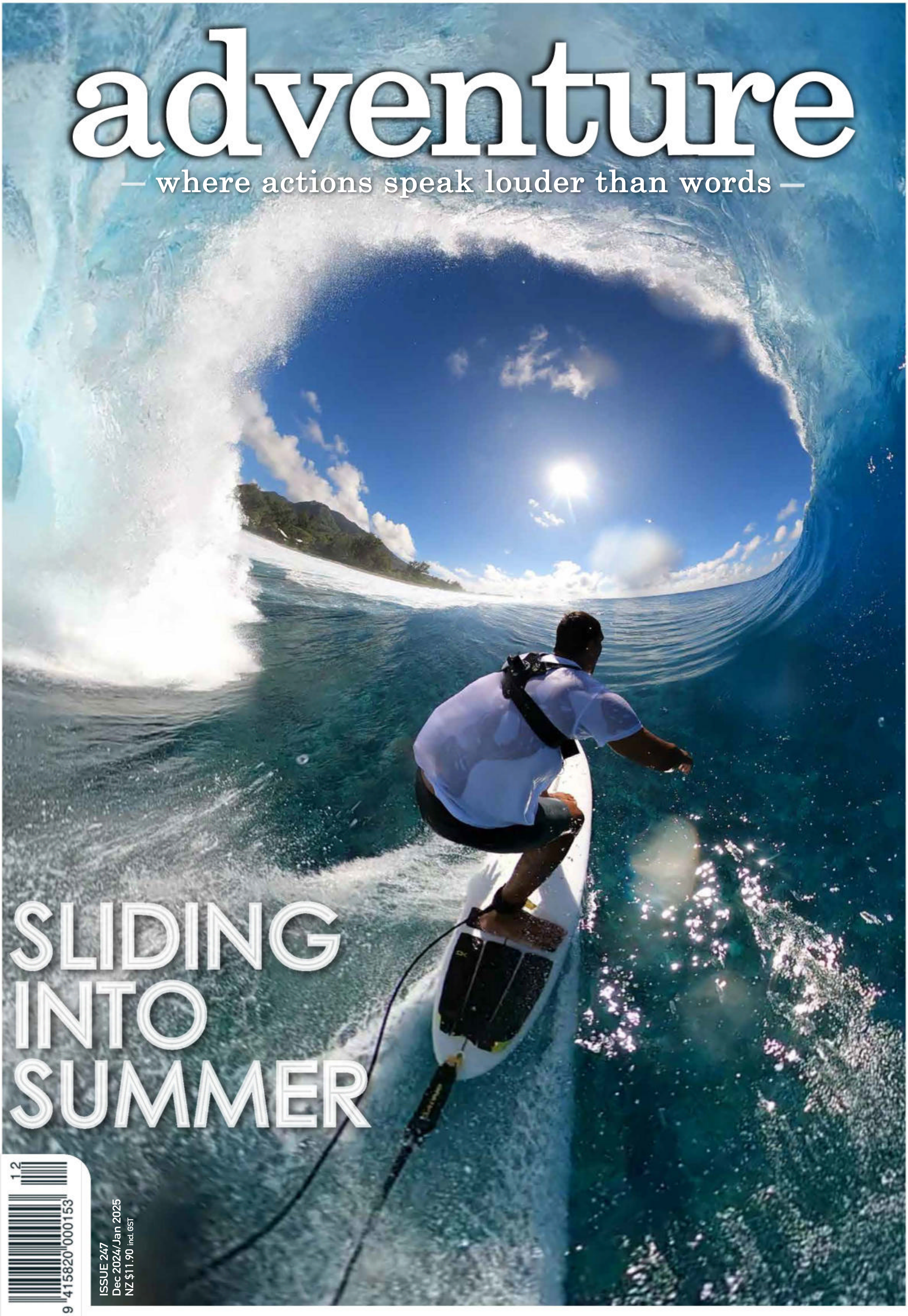

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ISSUE 247
Dec 2024/Jan 2025
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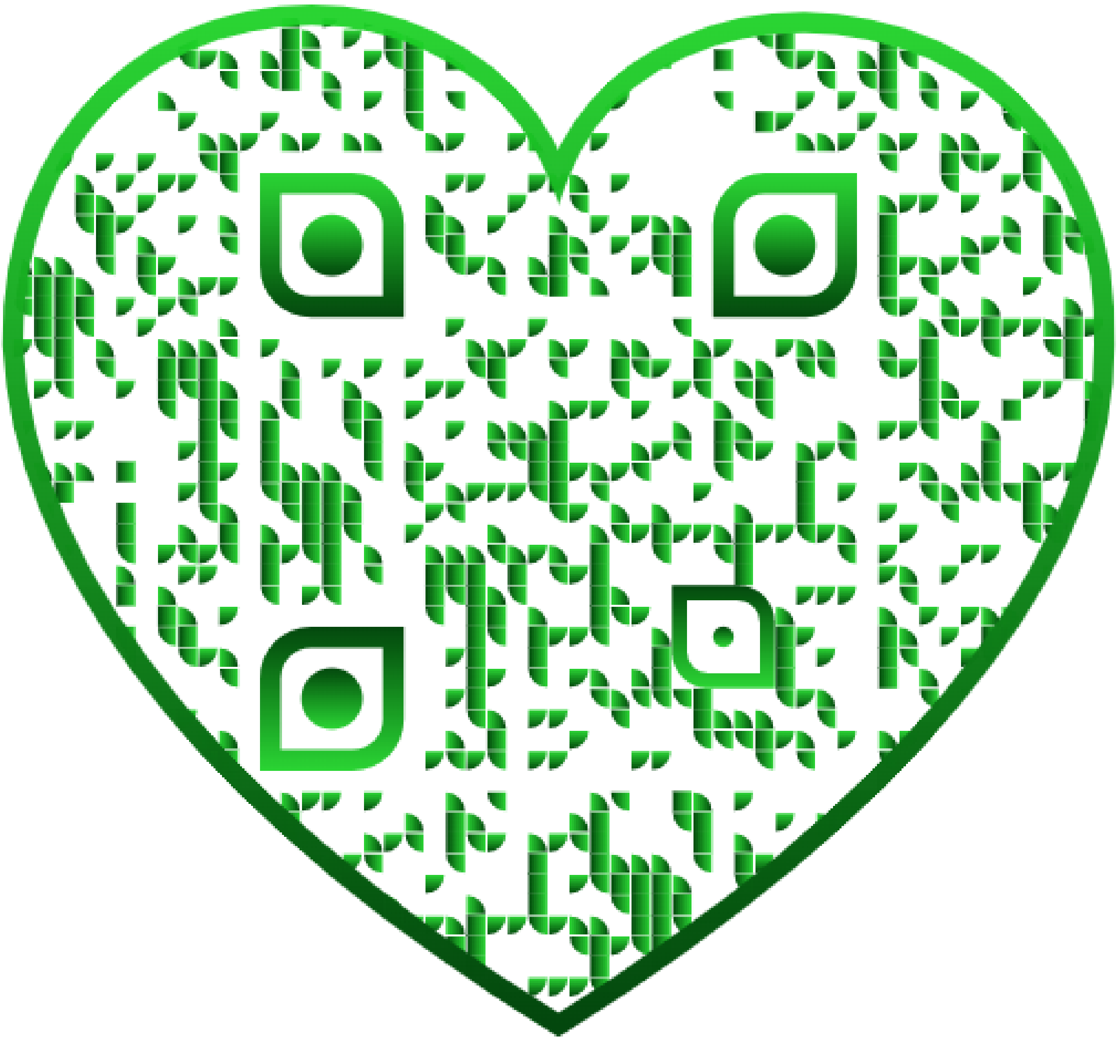

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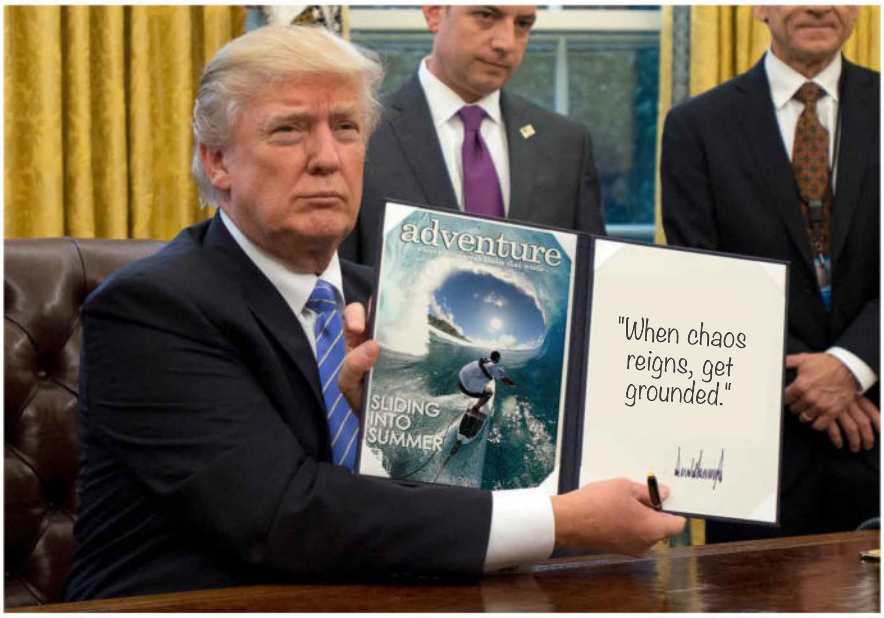

Image created with a little help from AI

WTF Just Happened?

As 2024 draws to a close, it feels like we've stumbled into a DeJa'Vu alternate reality. On December the 5th, as fireworks loomed, the world stood and said 'WTF', as Donald Trump avalanched into the White House… again! Just when you thought the world might catch its breath, the United States re-elects Donald Trump. Yep, again.

Over half of American voters decided to reboard the Trump express, a political rollercoaster that's as divisive as it is unpredictable. And while the rest of the world collectively mutters, "You've got to be kidding me," the candidate with the most votes wins, and here we are.

The ripples? They're crossing oceans, from Washington to Wellington. Economic chatter hints at tighter tariffs, a potential end to free trade agreements, and an isolationist U.S. policy that could spark inflation worldwide. US immigration policies are poised for a seismic shift, threatening to strand families and disrupt international dynamics. Minority groups, especially LGBTQ+ communities brace for a political climate that may roll back hard-won rights, and women's rights are facing an enormous right-wing storm.

This election, social media became the unofficial kingmaker. This election was less about policies and more about how easily we're swayed by click-bites and algorithms. Joe Rogan's podcast featuring Trump raked in over 33 million views in just two days! The result? An election where perceived image and influence eclipsed substance and honesty.

When chaos reigns get grounded.
While political games and digital chaos dominate, one constant remains: the great outdoors. When the world tilts off its axis, the wild offers the perfect reset: Rock under your hands, dirt on your boots, and water to cleanse you back into reality. Whether you're scaling a cliff, tramping through native bush, or shredding a powdery slope, nature delivers a clarity that no algorithm can replicate. Here at Adventure, we choose to focus on what grounds us, not what unravels us.

2024 wasn't just about global 'WTF' moments. It was also a year of resilience, a time when the world began to breathe again. Post-COVID, outdoor adventures surged.

As we wrap up 2024, it's time to reflect, and top of my gratitude list is where we live. New Zealand remains a paradise for adventurers. From the rugged peaks of the Southern Alps to the quiet beauty of Northland's beaches, and literally everything in between, we're spoilt for choice.

And it's not just about the places—it's about the people. The tramping buddy who shares their last energy bar, the ski mate who challenges you to push harder, and the loved ones who remind you why these moments matter. Connection, both to the land and each other, is what keeps us grounded.

So, as the world keeps spinning, this won't be the last 'WTF' moment, so here's our challenge: embrace the wild. Let 2025 be the year you go further, try something new, and chase that sense of awe.

The wild adventure is out there, ready to answer the questions the world's noise can't.

Here's to rock, dirt, and water.
Let's make every moment count.

Steve Dickinson / Editor

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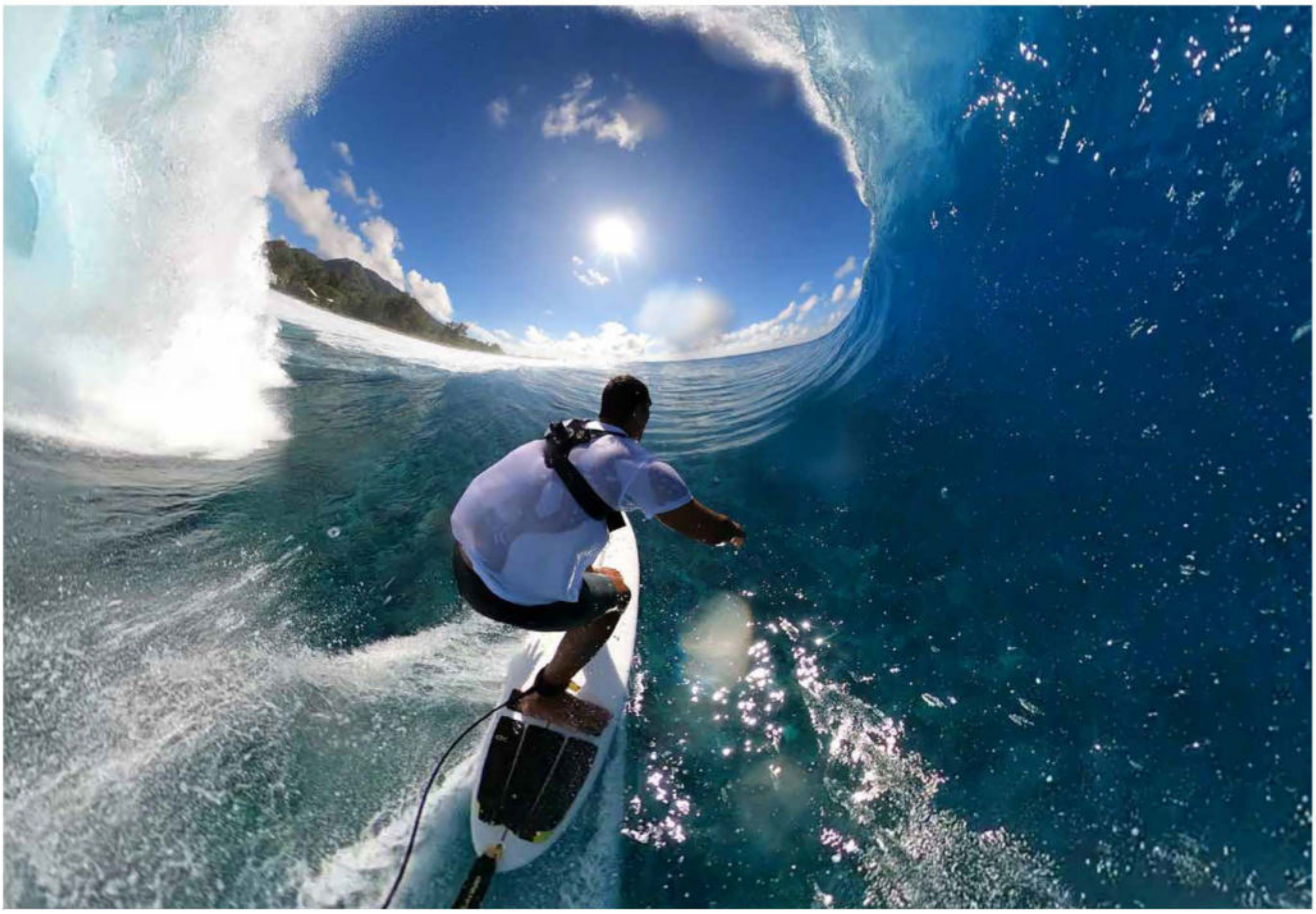

BEHIND THE COVER

You are not going to meet a nicer guy than Tikanui Smith, he's an amazing surfer, full of Tahitian spirit of fun and friendship. He either calls you Brother or Uncle, and he means it. Once you have met, drank a few Hinano's or chased some waves together, you are like family.
Tika sent us this image from a secrete spot in Tahiti just to remind us to come back for a visit. Hope this issue's cover shot inspires you.

Tikanui Smith

Where: Somewhere in French Polynesia ha-ha.
How it was shot: By my SailVideoSystem harness and GoPro360.
What is happening: I just made a big drop on one of the biggest wave I caught in my home break. I was surfing with 3 other local friends and it was a crazy perfect day with nobody out and crazy bombs, blue sky and full sunny.
What happen next: Just made a big late drop and entered in that big blue barrel and it kept barrelling for a little moment with big spit out, so not super clear footage cause of the spit, but made the wave and made it safe to the shore!

EDITOR & ADVERTISING MANAGER
Steve Dickinson
Mob: 027 577 5014
steve@pacificmedia.co.nz
ART DIRECTOR
Lynne Dickinson
design@pacificmedia.co.nz
SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
subscribe at www.pacificmedia-shop.co.nz
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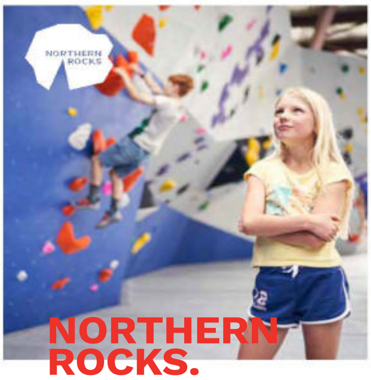

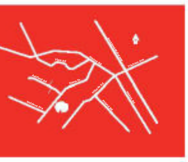

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LETTER OF THE ISSUE

Dear Adventure Team,

2023 didn't exactly wrap up as I'd hoped. There was nothing adventurous about my tumble—just a clumsy trip over the curb outside my house that left me with a broken femur in two places.

The first month was brutal: pain, discomfort, and plenty of self-pity. I've never been much of an adventurer. Sure, I played a bit of rugby in my youth, but at 32, I was more like a hamster on a wheel—fit, but stuck in a monotonous routine.

At first, a broken leg felt like the end of the road. But then, a friend handed me a copy of Adventure Magazine. Your editorial about making the most of each day struck a chord. It wasn't about climbing Everest or running ultra-marathons; it was about showing up for yourself and enjoying what you can do.

That message changed everything. As soon as I could hobble, I made a pact with myself: I'd get moving. What started as a slow shuffle around the block turned into walks along the beach. Last week, I ticked off my fifth major overnight tramp of 2024.

I won't bore you with the details of where I've been—your readers have probably done bigger and better things. But I wanted to say thank you for the nudge I didn't know I needed. Your magazine didn't just get me off the couch; it helped me rediscover the beauty and adventure in my own backyard.

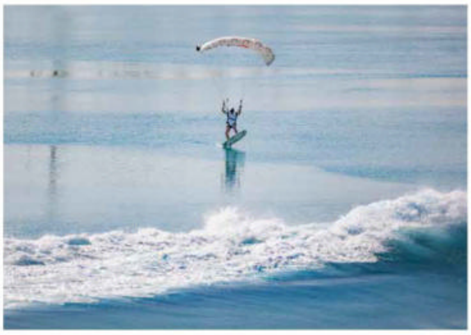
Best,
John Graham (Wellington)

Editor's Note:
John, great to hear about your recovery! Your story is our Letter of the Issue, and we'll be sending you a Hydro Flask to accompany you on your next adventure. Keep exploring!

If you would like to send a letter to the editor – can be about anything from 'butterflies to brick bats' send to Steve@pacificmedia.co.nz – every letter we promise will be responded to.

BREAKING THE RULE BOOK

Chilean wingsuit daredevil Sebastián Álvarez just rewrote the rulebook on adrenaline sports, pulling off a jaw-dropping trifecta that's never been done before. Picture this: leaping from a helicopter at 12,000 feet, sky-surfing in freefall, swooping under a parachute, and then landing—mid-flight—onto the world's longest artificial wave at Surf Abu Dhabi. All while riding a surfboard strapped to his feet.
Full story: **www.adventuremagazine.co.nz**



Images courtesy of Red Bull

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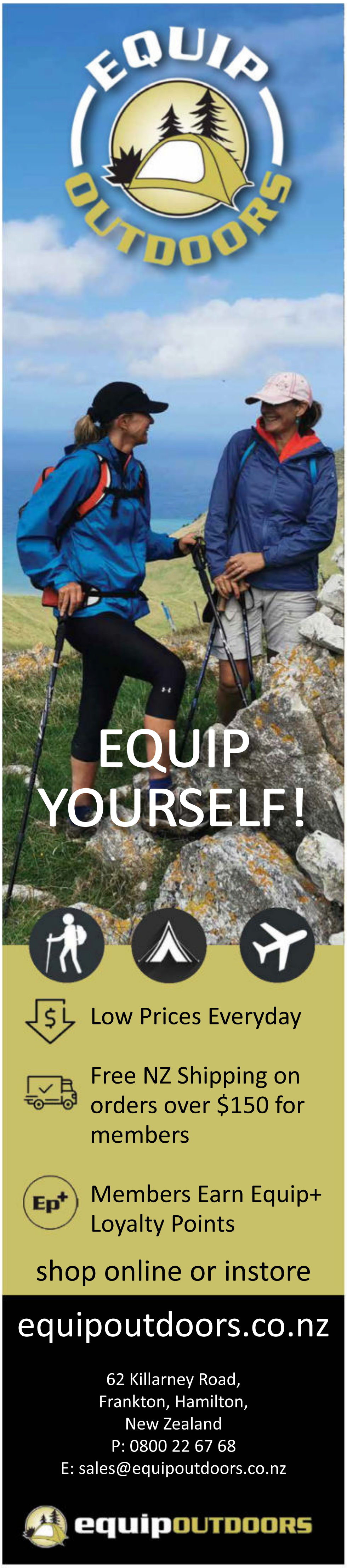

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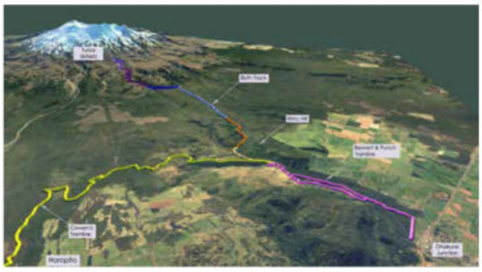
TE ARA MANGAWHERO – A NEW LINK IN THE MOUNTAINS TO SEA NETWORK

The first stage of Te Ara Mangawhero, a 21.4km eco-tourism trail, has officially opened, connecting Tūroa and Ohakune on the slopes of Maunga Ruapehu. This new section strengthens the Mountains to Sea route, providing a unique opportunity for hikers and cyclists to explore one of New Zealand's most striking landscapes.

The trail stretches from the alpine environment near Tūroa to the historic Ohakune Old Coach Road, following the old Bennett and Punch bush tramway. It crosses the Mangawhero Stream, with several bridges offering views of Maunga Ruapehu. This is a journey through both history and nature, with the landscape shifting from high-country terrain to lush bush.

Te Ara Mangawhero is the result of a collaboration between Ngāti Rangi, local communities, and regional authorities, and was developed with sustainability in mind. Construction focused on minimizing environmental impact, including using eco-friendly materials and replanting native species in the surrounding ngahere.



Whanganui District Mayor Andrew Tripe, who chairs the Mountains to Sea Partnership, called the opening a major step forward. *"This is a world-class addition to the Great Ride, and will bring lasting benefits to both the Ruapehu and Whanganui regions,"* he said. Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kirton predicts the trail will draw up to 50,000 visitors annually, contributing around $36 million to the local economy.

Images courtesy of Red Bull

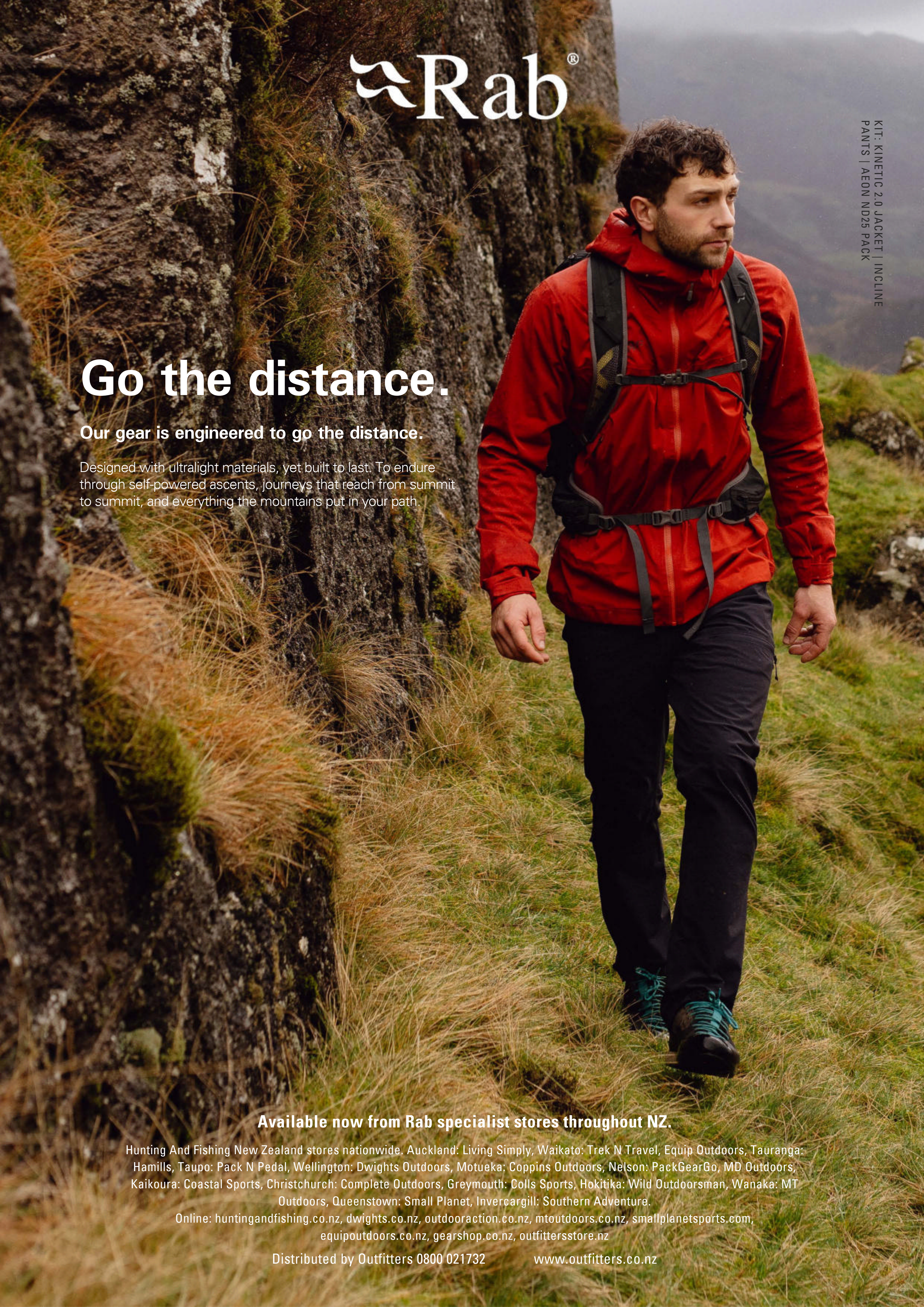
BRIDGING THE GAP

Earlier this year, Jaan Roose achieved a groundbreaking feat by traversing the Bosphorus Strait on a slackline, making him the first person to bridge the gap between Asia and Europe in this audacious manner.

Suspended 165 meters above the churning waters of the Bosphorus, Roose's 1,074-meter-long slackline connected the Asian side of Istanbul to the European side, a remarkable accomplishment given his challenging conditions. Battling against strong winds gusting up to 21 km/h and a temperature of 23°C, Roose completed the crossing in a mere 47 minutes, showcasing his physical prowess and mental determination.

Dubbed the Continental Pass, this latest achievement follows a series of extraordinary feats by the three-time world champion. Roose has consistently set new benchmarks in the slacklining world, including his daring 3,646-meter slackline across the Messina Strait earlier this year, which, despite a slip in the final stretch, highlighted his commitment to pushing the sport's limits. His previous stunts, such as the dazzling "Sparkline" challenge in Qatar and a nerve-wracking highline over Estonia's Valaste waterfall amid winter, have cemented his reputation as a trailblazer in slacklining.

For the full story go to **www.adventuremagazine.co.nz**



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FIGHTING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

New Zealand is surrounded by over 15,000 km of coastline, and more than 65% of us live within 5 km of the ocean. So, for us Kiwis, our coastal marine environment is a significant part of our lives and wellbeing.

It's important that we maintain these precious natural resources for our future generations. That's why a committed group of Kiwis has, for decades, fought for more fish in the water so we all continue to have access to a healthy and abundant fishery.

But don't be fooled; the fight is not over. From small Jack mackerel in the Hauraki Gulf to Blue Cod in the Marlborough Sounds, depletion is spreading like a disease. Our once abundant and diverse ecosystems are becoming barren. The one thing that these fish stocks have in common is that they are managed under New Zealand's 'world-leading' Quota Management System.

The only 'world-leading' feature about it is that it was the first System in the world to treat and trade fish as property rights. But the Quota Management System is no longer fit for purpose. It allows fish stocks to be depleted further down, down, down until there is nothing left.

Our humble kahawai were one of the original victims of excessive greed. Having a surface schooling behaviour, the "peoples' fish" never stood a chance against spotter planes and purse seiners who caught thousands of schools of kahawai in the 1980's.

The kahawai stock was in a serious state of decline - around 80% of the original, estimated population biomass was gone by 1996. Exported as low-value protein, mostly for pet food and crayfish bait.

The Minister of Fisheries made a poor attempt to rebuild kahawai populations in 2004 by introducing the species into the Quota Management System with the existing commercial catch limits. This meant the fishery was unable to rebuild to an abundant level within a reasonable timeframe.

The system was biased, handing the majority of future catching rights to those who had inflicted the most damage on the fishery. Our interests in having abundant kahawai inshore and available in places we traditionally fished were totally ignored.

Appalled by the Minister's decision, the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council and recreational fishers took the Minister to the High Court and won. The case continued to the Court of Appeal and eventually the Supreme Court in 2009.

In the subsequent Court-ordered review, the Minister chose to manage the largest North Island kahawai stock at more than 50% of the estimated original stock size, allowing abundance to be rebuilt so everyone could benefit.

Now, more than a decade later, most of our inshore fish populations are still managed below 50% of their estimated unfished level. This is not good enough. Depleted populations make fish stocks more susceptible to collapse, especially when combined with warming waters, land runoff, and pollution.

Our neighbours across the ditch are taking meaningful steps to increase abundance and maintain balance in the ecosystem by deliberately managing key fish stocks at much higher levels, leaving more fish in the water. So, what is limiting us from doing the same?

It is not acceptable to wait until fish stocks collapse before officials decide to adopt better management practices. Without meaningful change to the Quota Management System, we will continue to get the same result - fewer fish in the ocean and not enough kaimoana on our dinner plates.

The good news is that LegaSea will continue to advocate for your interests in having abundant fish stocks, a thriving marine environment, and a fair go for future generations. But we need your support.

By subscribing to LegaSea's newsletters here you can keep up to date on what's happening, how you can help and bring other people on board to share the load. The louder we are, the better our chance of restoring our fisheries.

LegaSea is a not-for-profit organisation established by the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council in 2012. LegaSea's core roles are to elevate public awareness of the issues affecting New Zealand's marine environment and to inspire public support to effect positive change. LegaSea collaborates with a range of organisations to restore New Zealand's coastal fisheries.

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UNBOUND

AN AOTEAROA ROAD TRIP

Rambo Estrada is one of New Zealand’s most prominent surf & ocean photographers, renowned for his ability to capture the raw beauty of Aotearoa’s coastlines and the essence of its surf culture. With over two decades of photography experience and a deep passion for exploring remote coastlines, Rambo has made his mark on the international surf scene. His unique style blends adventure with artistry, and his works often reflect a profound connection with the land and sea.

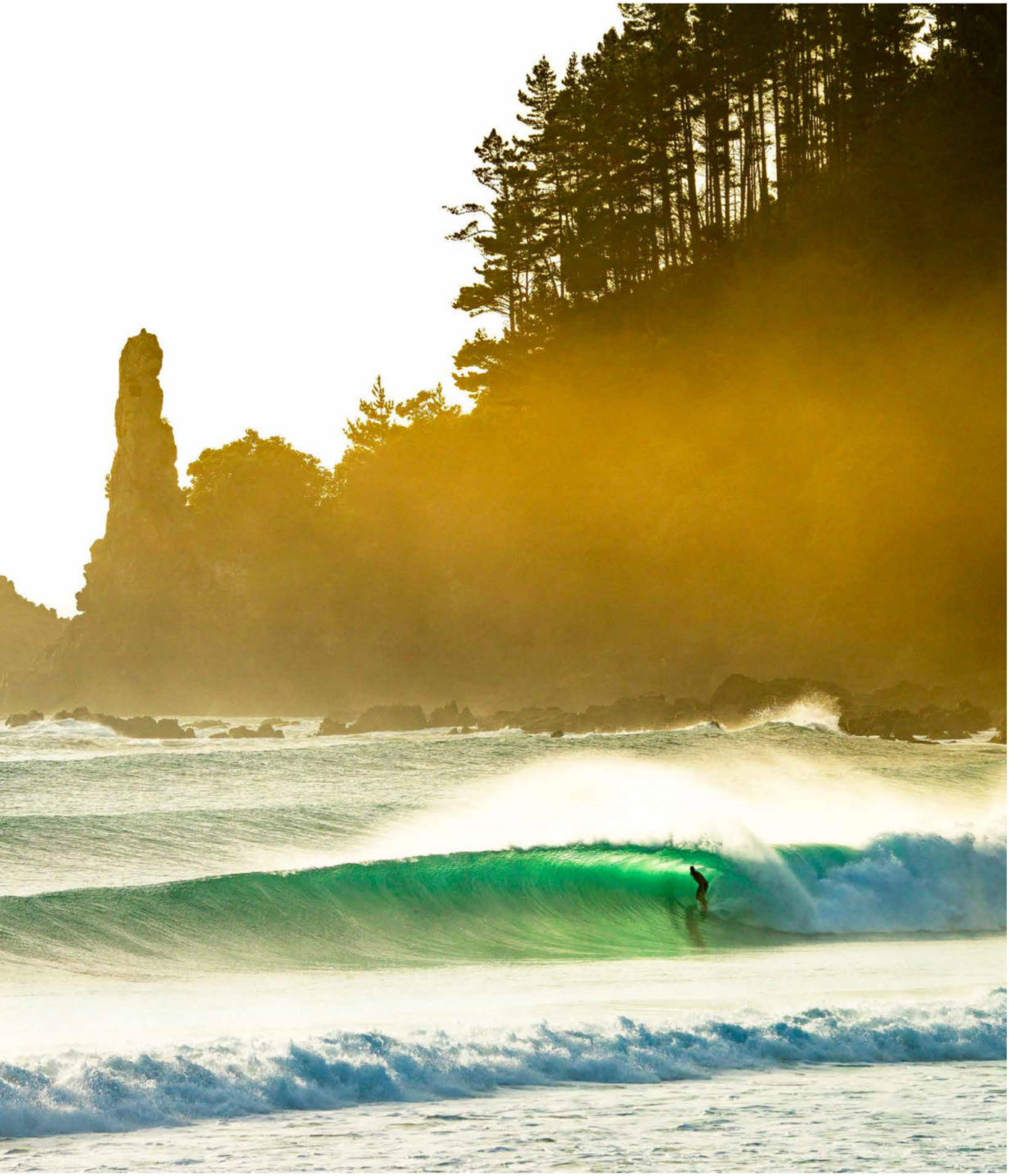
Where did the concept for the book come from? The concept for Unbound: Vol 1 came from my love of road trips and the beauty of New Zealand’s remote coastlines. I wanted to share the images I captured and stories from the interesting characters I’ve encountered in my travels. It was also a great excuse to spend as much time on the road as possible.

What was the most challenging part of putting this book together? I decided to write substantial extended captions. As I don’t name any locations, I made the captions more about my experiences, which was fun at first until I realised, I needed to come up with 300 more captions.

What criteria did you use when choosing which photos to include? When selecting the photos for Unbound: Vol 1, I wanted to focus on capturing New Zealand’s wild, untouched landscapes, with minimal signs of modern civilisation. The goal was to highlight the beauty of our isolated coastlines, those raw, rugged places where nature takes centre stage. I’ve always been drawn to areas that feel removed from the bustle of daily life, where the rural charm and unspoiled environment come through in the imagery. I hoped to convey a sense of adventure and discovery, creating a deeper connection to the land and sea that feels timeless and authentic.

Is there one aspect of the book you are most proud of, one story or image? My favourite is the feature on Rekohu. It was actually the trip that started everything off. A solo adventure that made me feel in love with the raw and isolated parts of Aotearoa.

What is the date range of the images – oldest – newest? Around 60% of the imagery is fresh and unseen, that was shot over 18 months, the other images span over the last decade. The oldest would be from around 2010, and the most recent ones were shot just a few days before the book went to print. I was driving Craig crazy subbing out photos last minute.



I clearly remember my first day at Waikato Polyteck, I sat down next to this bloke who had the energy of a toddler on a sugar rush. His name was Matt Hishon, and it wasn't long before I became a terrible influence, convincing Matt to ditch class anytime Raglan was on. Matt is an extremely talented artist, and while I dropped out after a year to pursue the lucrative career of part time employee of Backdoor surf shop, Matt completed his degree and went on to become the graphic designer for NZ Surfing Magazine. I was always stoked to see Matt's work contibuting to our local surf culture. We still occasionally bump into each other when the waves are good. It's nice to think, on this occasion, we unknowlingly collaborated on creating this little slice of visual art together.

This is what happens when you get up for sunrise and there's no sun. I went back the next morning and there was an epic sunrise, but in the end I decided I liked this photo more. The other shot was definitely prettier, but this photo more accurately captures the essense of the south coast.

Back in my childhood, we had a beach house in Papamoa. Up north, we called it a bach. Down south it would be called a crib. Those were the days when, surprisingly, beach living wasn't in high demaind and middle class families could snag a holiday house for $39k. These days, just owning your own home is an achievement, let alone a second beach retreat. But this, righ here, this is the new Kiwi holiday home dream. A caravan in paradise beats a second mortgage any day.

This is my favourite shot of my favourite place. It's the first photo that I decided to keep hidden from the world and stash away. It might have actually been the moment that inspired me to make this book. A shot like this could never be fully appreciated by viewing it on your phone. I wanted a more worthy outlet where I could share photos and conversations with folks I thought were interesting characters of New Zealand's surf culture.

What's your view on aggressive localism in New Zealand surf culture? Does it still exist? There's definitely still some heavy localism in certain areas, it's understandable that people want to protect their local breaks from overcrowding. There's plenty of great waves in NZ that I won't shoot. If the locals really don't want others there and go at great lengths to keep their spots on lock, then I'm going to respect that. There's enough coastline out there to keep me more than entertained.

What was harder—the images or the editorial? Definitely the editorial. Writing doesn't come as naturally to me as photography, so putting the stories together was more challenging. But it was also rewarding in its own way.

Do you have a favourite location to photograph? The bottom of the South Island holds a special place for me. It's wild, remote, and you never know what you're going to find down there. It's so cold and raw, it's definitely not for everyone, but that's what makes it great.

Why did you choose that cover image? The cover image chose itself. It was by far the best photo I captured throughout the process of putting the book together. It has all the elements I look for in an image, an incredible wave against a raw NZ landscape and a couple of mates loving the solitude of our epic coastline.

Is there a location you still feel you have not captured and is still on your to-do list? Definitely. There's so much isolated coast in Aotearoa. First spot on the list is The Wairarapa.

Has your approach to photography changed over the years, especially with new technology and techniques? Definitely. Technology has advanced so much, and while I still love shooting with a certain rawness, the tools available now allow for greater creativity. My approach has evolved to embrace these advancements, but at the core, it's still about capturing the moment in the most authentic way possible.

What's next? Another book? Another project? For sure. I've only scratched the surface of what Aotearoa has to offer. I'm already thinking about Unbound: Vol 2 and more road trips to zones I still haven't explored.

Where to buy the book: Unbound: Vol 1 is available for purchase on my website, **www.ramboestrada.co.nz.**
RRP $100, with worldwide shipping

Book author, photographer and designer, Rambo Estrada

MOUNT TUTOKO

KING OF FIORDLAND

Words by Derek Cheng
Photos by Derek Cheng and Nick Flyvbjerg

"A towering mountain lost in the mist, of massive snow domes and cataracts of ice, and of smooth black rock walls rising from deep valleys of lush sodden forest."

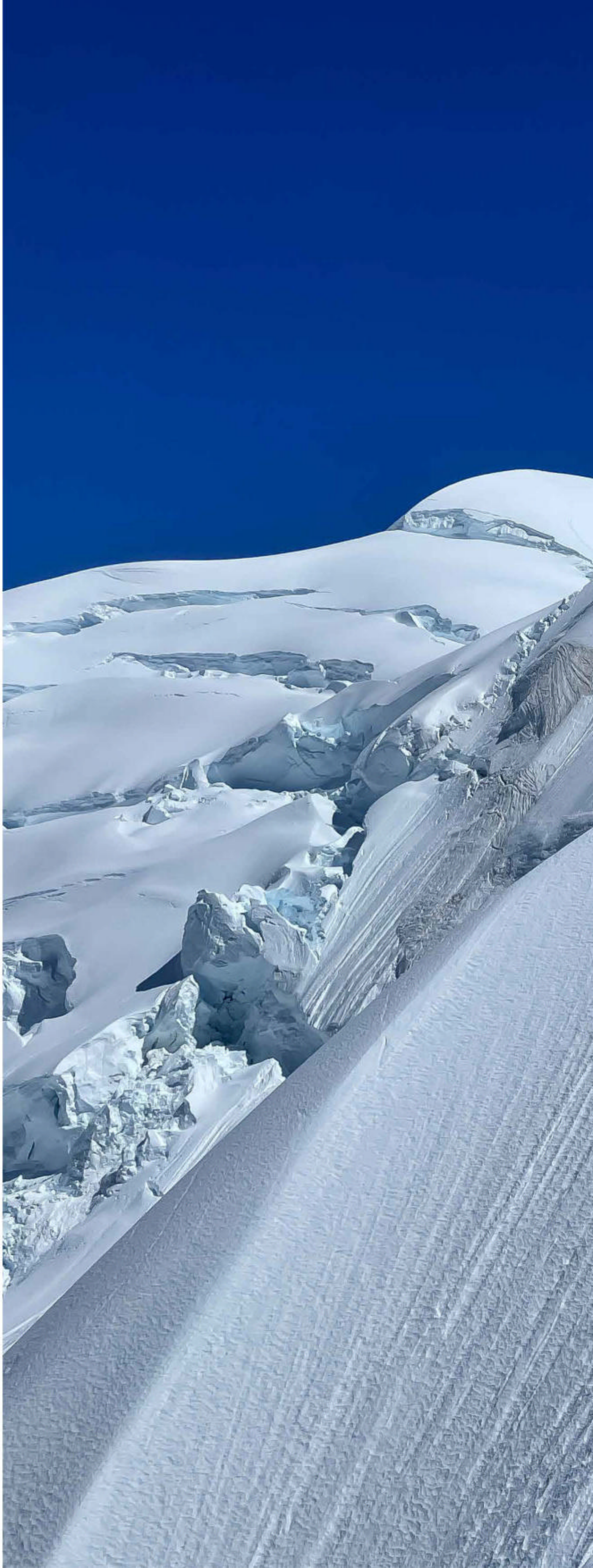
So reads the beginning of Peter Robinson's essay on the first ascent of the southeast ridge of Tutoko, Monarch of the Darrans, the highest peak in Fiordland at 2723m. It's named after the last local rangatira (chief), who lived at Martin's Bay where the Hollyford River meets the Tasman Sea.

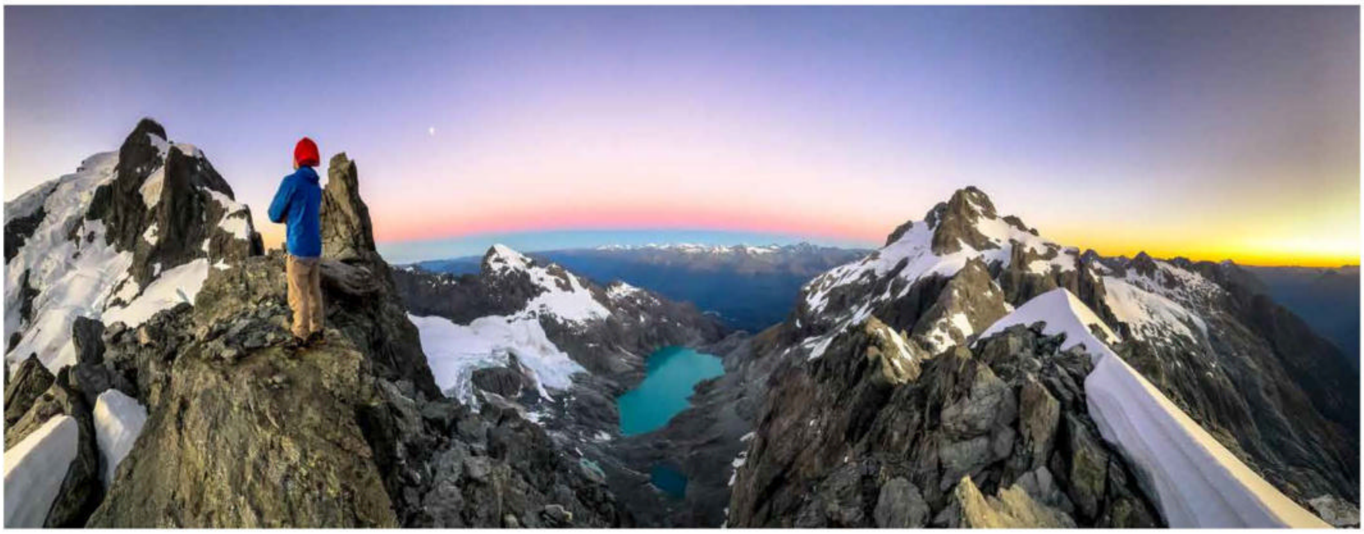
The first attempt to climb Mt Tutoko was in 1895. A party led by Malcolm Ross thought they'd succeeded, only to later discover they'd climbed neighbouring peak Mt Madeline (2536m), and only her lower west peak.

It was another quarter century before another serious attempt, this time led by the incorrigible Samuel Turner. With a road and Homer Tunnel more than three decades into the future, Turner's party took a boat from Bluff to Milford Sound, bush-bashed inland for a day, felled three massive trees to bridge the Cleddau River, and then spent several days ferrying loads up Tutoko River Valley. When they finally made it to the base of the Age Glacier on Tutoko's southern face, they cut hundreds to steps into the ice - no crampons, only hobnail boots - before retreating in a deluge.

Tutoko eluded Turner again when he returned the following year, but he managed to summit Mt Madeline, and make the first attempt to traverse into the Central Darrans after exploring the jagged line of peaks to Madeline's south.

"I looked over a chasm, and it revealed the most amazing surprise I have ever had in all my climbing career … a lake about two miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, out of which a waterfall was flowing. It was the most thrilling sight and prettiest scenery that I have ever seen," he wrote in his memoir The Conquest of the New Zealand Alps. Today these carry his name - Lake Turner and Turner Falls - though he only admired them from a distance, his efforts to descend to the lake halted by "an overhanging precipice".





During his third Tutoko expedition, he stumbled on what is now known as Turner's Bivouac, a random heap of enormous slabs of stone that have since provided a sheltered rock cave for countless climbers. The party spent the following days exploring a pass between Madeline and Tutoko (named Turners Pass, somewhat inevitably), setting up a tent site on the Donne Glacier to attempt the Monarch from its northern slopes. But they eventually turned back 60m from the summit. Continuing would have condemned them to topping out in the cold and the dark, and maybe not coming back.

The attempt still took a turn for the dramatic. They retreated to their tent spot, but a heavy snowstorm ruled out returning to Turner's Biv the next morning. Instead they headed northeast, down glaciated slopes and thick bush to the confluence of the rivers Hollyford and Pyke, which took two days and all of their remaining food (including an overnight-stewed kea).

Famished the following day and facing "one of the hardest 20 miles" to Martin's Bay, they happened to stumble into the McKenzie brothers mustering cattle in a paddock. The bedraggled climbers were the first people the brothers had seen in almost two years, other than those dropping off supplies by boat to their home in Martin's Bay. Soon they were in a hut, devouring food. "There is no telling what would have happened if we had not met the McKenzies," wrote Turner.

It wasn't until 1924 that Tutoko's summit was finally breached. Turner and veteran guide Peter Graham climbed the northwest ridge from the Hollyford valley, maybe using a similar route that Turner had used to descend three years earlier. They summited in a whiteout, and were so uncertain they'd reached the top that they returned the next day, when it was less cloudy, to reassure themselves there was no higher point.

Previous page: A snowy part of the southeast ridge of Mt Tutoko

Top to bottom: Nick Flyvbjerg gazes at Mt Tutoko at sunset, with Mt Madeline on the right

Mt Tutoko from the southern flanks of Mt Underwood

Derek Cheng rappelling down the third rock step

The first ascent from the Tukoto River Valley didn't happen until 1951, via the southwest ridge. Graham was later asked why he and Turner hadn't tried this particular way up. "Mr Turner wasn't a very good climber, you know," Graham replied.

Today the most popular way up Tutoko is the southeast ridge, which features three spectacular rock buttresses guarding the summit ridge. It was first climbed in 1956, when the Age Glacier was so corpulent that it provided a smooth and stable tongue of snow and ice to the base of the first buttress.

The increasingly warming climate has since seen the glacier not only retreat, but disintegrate in places. Where the tongue now meets the rock, it's neither smooth nor stable, but a cluster of disfigured blocks of ice that might shift or collapse at any moment. The prospect of being caught under them is unappealing, so we headed up a friendly snow slope to gain the Tutoko-Madeline ridge.

This is quite the detour, probably more than doubling the time to the col at the base of the first rock buttress. But it's not without rewards. The ridge is full of delightful rock surprises to stem between, scramble up, and even jump across.

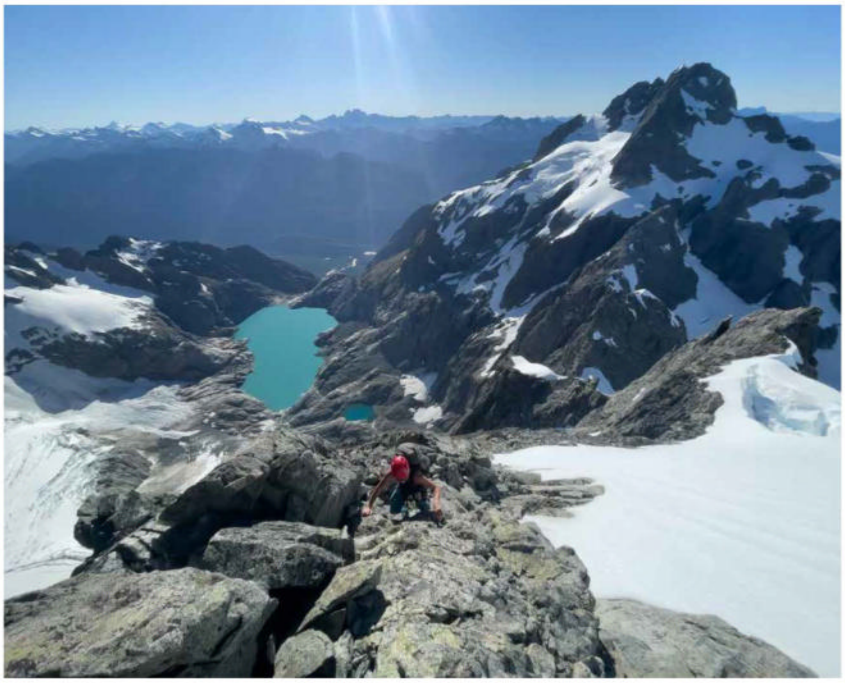
Our team of three - myself, Nick and Rachel - traversed our way along the ridge to a bivvy spot under a giant headstone of a rock slab. It was a still evening when we arrived, with sunset colours that wrapped an ever-blending mix of blues, pinks and indigos around the curvature of the horizon.

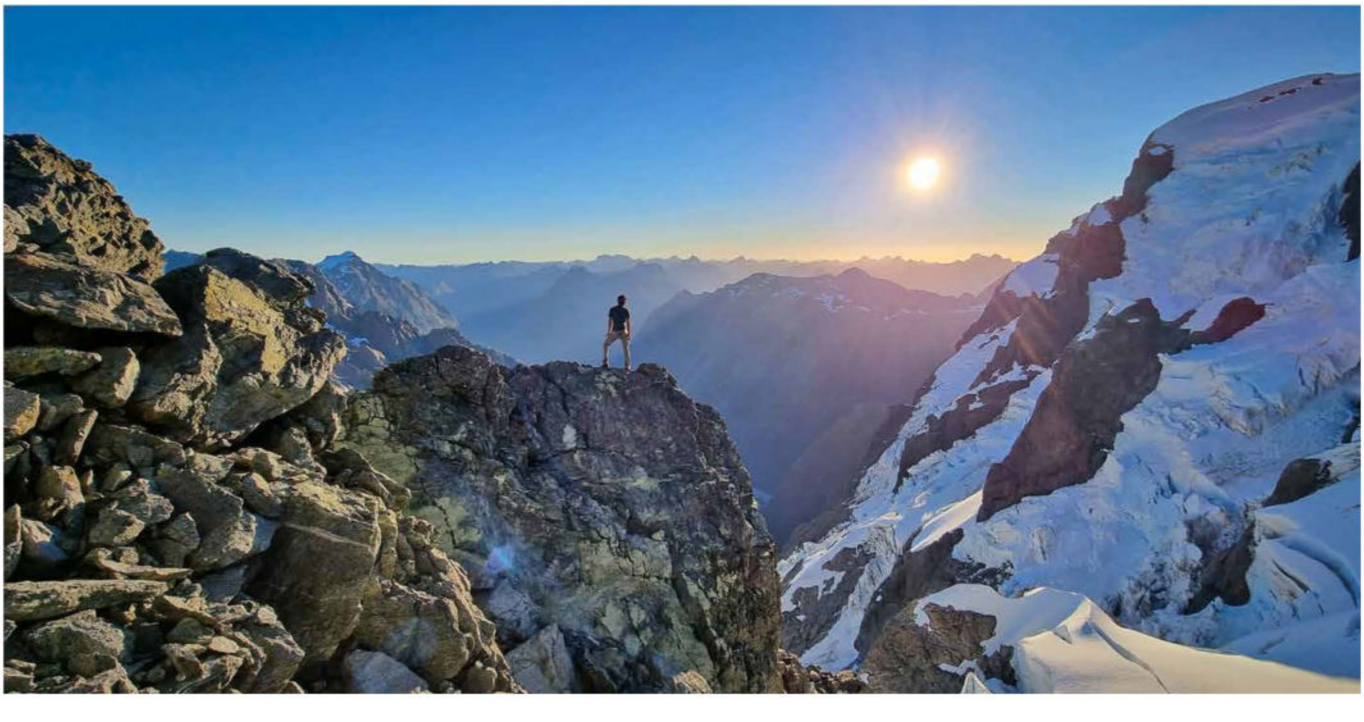
The next morning, we gingerly made our way to the edge of a precipice, where we rappelled 30m to the col. Here we stashed our overnight gear before plugging steps in the snow to the first buttress, grade 13: a series of mini-corners, plenty of holds, and bountiful exposure.

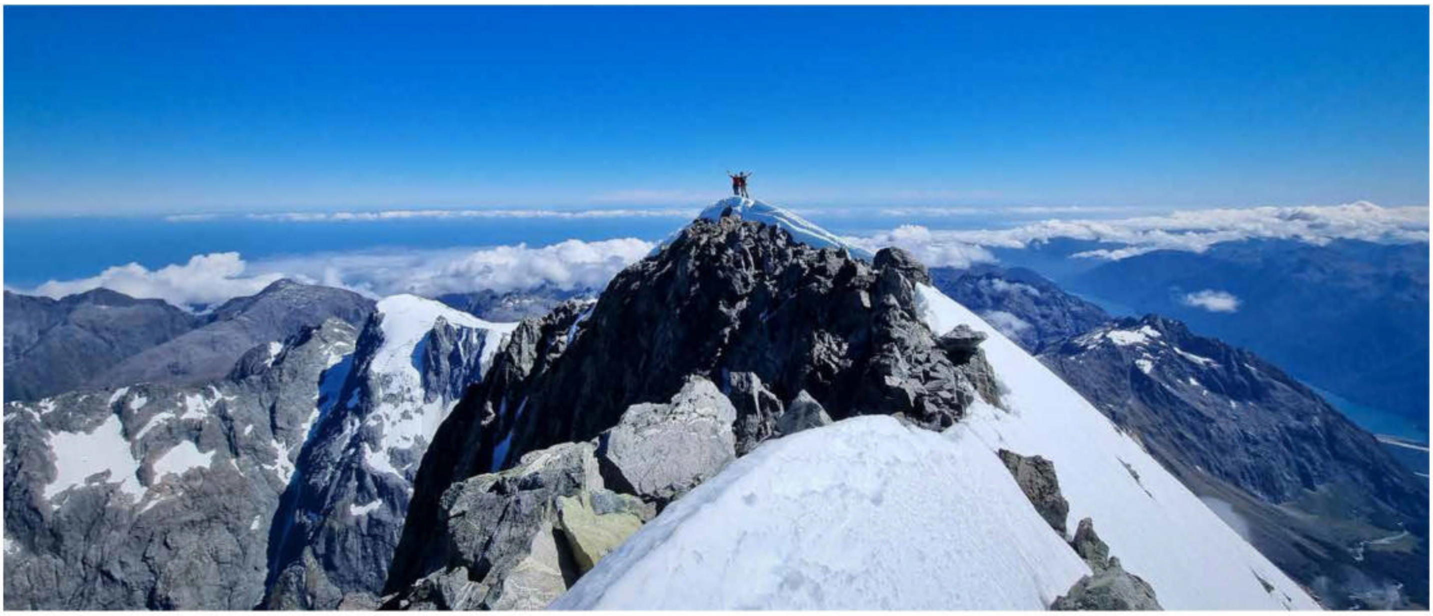
Top to bottom:
Rachel Knott having dinner next to the bivvy spot at sunset

Rachel Knott on the second rock buttress of Mt Tutoko's southeast ridge

Sunset near our bivvy spot







Above: Mt Tutoko summit / Right: The 'ladder to heaven' to the summit of Mt Tutoko

Higher up we emerged into the morning sun, switched to ice tools and crampons, and traversed snow to the second buttress: a rock face at a friendlier angle. Another snow traverse then took us to the final buttress, grade 14: a steeper section, but featured and with good rock.

A snow arete then led us to the top of a small knob with a crevasse on its western flank, which we had to descend. It was wide, deep, and ugly enough for us to take the rope out and rappel over, rather than down-climb. A series of snow slopes then led to the summit ridge, described by the first ascent party as a “ladder to heaven”.

It was a windless, bluebird day as we arrived on the summit. Serrated slopes of ice and snow dropped away to teal-coloured glacier lakes to the north. To the west, the pointy tip of Mt Pembroke stood out against the endless blue backdrop of the Tasman Sea. We sipped summit single malt, but were mindful of the sun continuing to heat the “ladder to heaven”. We soon started backtracking, crossing crevasses on snow bridges before they melted.

The other uncertainty was the ugly crevasse we'd rappelled past earlier. Thankfully it still had plenty of ice in it for us to climb up. We then made good time down the snow slope to the first of several rappels down the rock buttresses. Once back at the col, we retrieved our overnight gear and took a moment to relax, refuel, and ponder our next move.

Should we go back the way we came, along the Tutoko-Madeline ridge, or try the unknown down the Age Glacier? The latter would be much faster, so long as we could negotiate whatever gnarly blocks of ice lay ahead.

Two factors were persuasive. Firstly, the 30m rock face up to where we’d spent the night looked tricky to protect with the limited climbing gear we had. And secondly, we were tired. This made us more open than usual to hoping the unknown would work out well. This was also a risky way to think, as we had no gauge on the likelihood of this.

The sun was just starting to hit the snow slopes below the col as we started down the glacier. It was easy-going to a rock buttress, which we down-climbed to what we'd been expecting: a section of broken glacier.

We looked for an easy way around it or above it, but in the end we saw a decent-looking path right through it. One by one, we weaved our way over and around slowly-disintegrating snow and ice, holding our breaths in places as if that would make the blocks less likely to wobble, sink, or break off entirely.

After we had all made it through without a hiccup, we relaxed through easier terrain to Turner’s Bivouac. We spent the rest of the evening much as the first ascent party spent their days following their success in 1956: "Enjoying the scenic and sunbathing advantages of Turner['s Biv] with the six thousand foot ice and rock face of Tutoko as a backdrop and the ice avalanches for entertainment. There is probably no more spectacular sight in New Zealand.”

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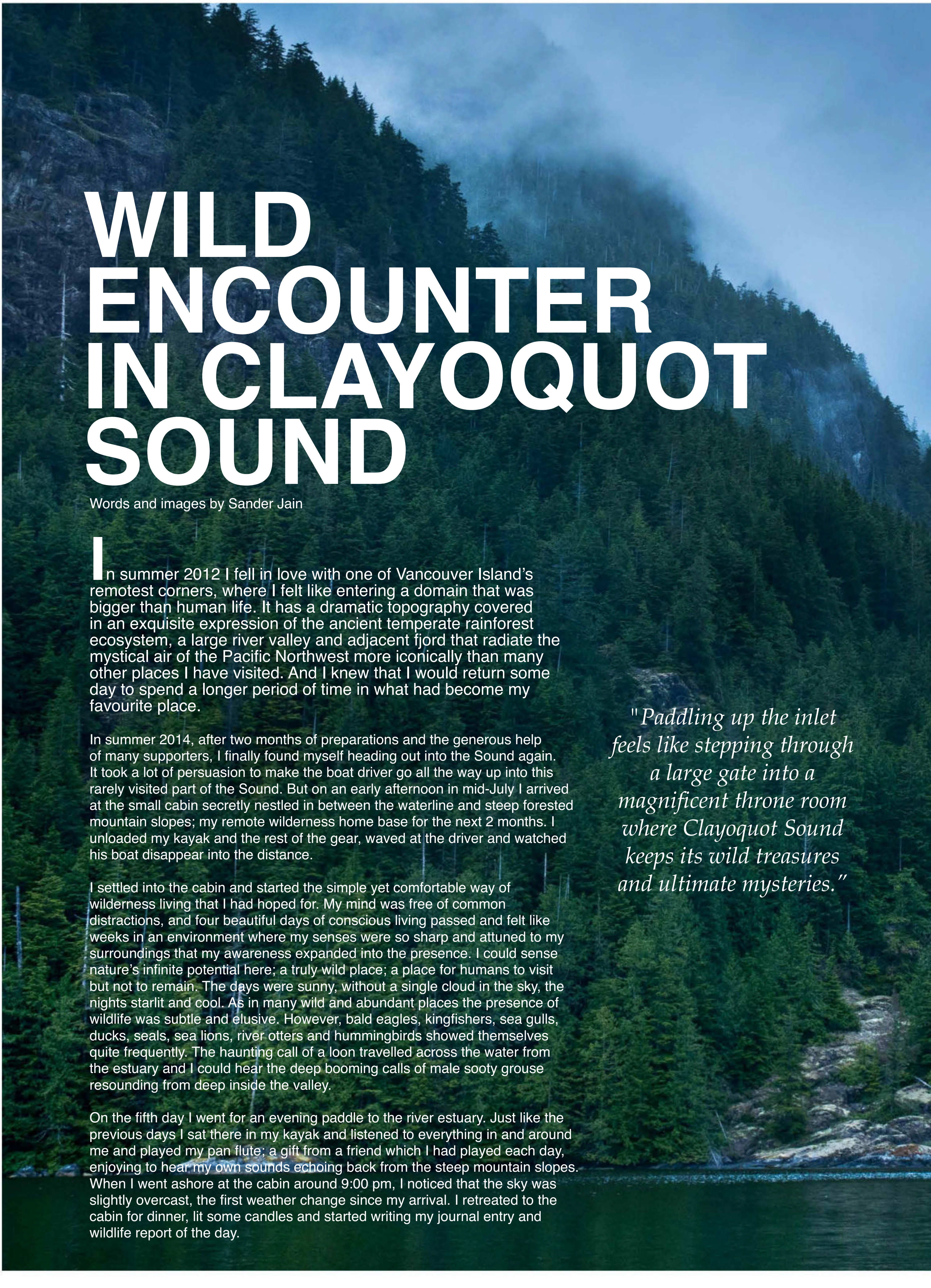
"A series of snow slopes then led to the summit ridge, described by the first ascent party as a "ladder to heaven". It was a windless, bluebird day as we arrived on the summit."



WILD ENCOUNTER IN CLAYOQUOT SOUND

Words and images by Sander Jain

In summer 2012 I fell in love with one of Vancouver Island's remotest corners, where I felt like entering a domain that was bigger than human life. It has a dramatic topography covered in an exquisite expression of the ancient temperate rainforest ecosystem, a large river valley and adjacent fjord that radiate the mystical air of the Pacific Northwest more iconically than many other places I have visited. And I knew that I would return some day to spend a longer period of time in what had become my favourite place.

In summer 2014, after two months of preparations and the generous help of many supporters, I finally found myself heading out into the Sound again. It took a lot of persuasion to make the boat driver go all the way up into this rarely visited part of the Sound. But on an early afternoon in mid-July I arrived at the small cabin secretly nestled in between the waterline and steep forested mountain slopes; my remote wilderness home base for the next 2 months. I unloaded my kayak and the rest of the gear, waved at the driver and watched his boat disappear into the distance.

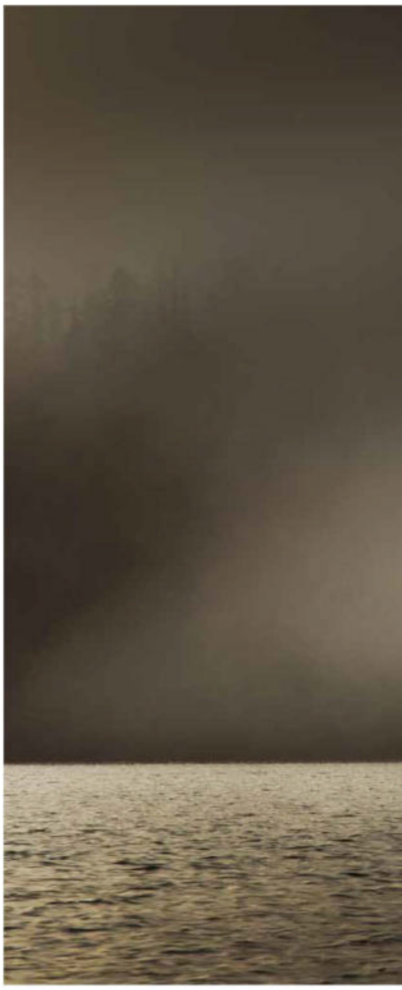
I settled into the cabin and started the simple yet comfortable way of wilderness living that I had hoped for. My mind was free of common distractions, and four beautiful days of conscious living passed and felt like weeks in an environment where my senses were so sharp and attuned to my surroundings that my awareness expanded into the presence. I could sense nature's infinite potential here; a truly wild place; a place for humans to visit but not to remain. The days were sunny, without a single cloud in the sky, the nights starlit and cool. As in many wild and abundant places the presence of wildlife was subtle and elusive. However, bald eagles, kingfishers, sea gulls, ducks, seals, sea lions, river otters and hummingbirds showed themselves quite frequently. The haunting call of a loon travelled across the water from the estuary and I could hear the deep booming calls of male sooty grouse resounding from deep inside the valley.

"Paddling up the inlet feels like stepping through a large gate into a magnificent throne room where Clayoquot Sound keeps its wild treasures and ultimate mysteries."

On the fifth day I went for an evening paddle to the river estuary. Just like the previous days I sat there in my kayak and listened to everything in and around me and played my pan flute; a gift from a friend which I had played each day, enjoying to hear my own sounds echoing back from the steep mountain slopes. When I went ashore at the cabin around 9:00 pm, I noticed that the sky was slightly overcast, the first weather change since my arrival. I retreated to the cabin for dinner, lit some candles and started writing my journal entry and wildlife report of the day.

Surrounded by ancient temperate rainforest while kayaking through Clayoquot Sound's wilderness.

Sander Jain's basecamp expedition kit.



When I stepped outside again the clouds had thickened like a lid that sealed off the fjord and gave the air a muggy character. It was pitch-black, the water was calm, there was no wind, and I could neither hear any bird calls nor any sea lions or seals catching fish close to shore like previous evenings. I went back inside and did my routine check-in with my safety contact in Tofino via an InReach device when a strange sound in the distance called me back outside. It sounded as if big rocks were being moved, dragged, turned or thrown over in the distance. I figured that it must be a black bear flipping over boulders in the intertidal zone to look for a late night protein snack, or perhaps some rocks getting lose and falling off the cliffs due to temperature changes. Then, I could hear what appeared like owl vocalizations. It sounded as if several of them were replying to each other's calls from different locations. The rock sounds continued. Other than that it was perfectly silent.

Half an hour later I was brushing my teeth at the light of my headlamp in the cabin when all of a sudden a very loud blast from somewhere in the vicinity shook me up. One of the big rock sounds had erupted with the intensity of a small explosion, and the sound was coming from closer than before. My toothbrush almost fell out of my mouth, and I sensed my hair standing on end at the back of my neck. There was no doubt that some thing was causing that noise.

Was I not alone in this remote place? Was there illegal logging in my favourite wild fjord? I hadn't seen nor heard boats, lights, or traces of human activity at all; nothing. This place is truly cut off from the outside world by distance and its inaccessible terrain all around. It was pretty much impossible to enter unnoticed. No, it could not be human activity! Especially not at 11:45 at night.

I was completely alone in this remote corner, and I was beginning to feel it. My subconscious instincts dictated me to simply retreat into sleep. While climbing up into the attic to my sleeping spot I tried to convince myself that the loud, sharp noise from a few minutes ago must have been the massive splash of a hunting sea lion. I thought that I had probably just allowed myself to get spooked by the darkness and silence in combination with what I was hearing outside that I hadn't heard the previous nights. I lay down in my sleeping bag, switched off my headlamp and closed my eyes. Lying in the darkness, I could hear how more rock sounds and owl-like vocalizations were cutting the silence outside.

I finally fell asleep. And then, around 3:20 am, all of a sudden, I woke up from my dreams into a nightmare. I was fully present right away, my eyes were wide open, my breath came to a stop, I felt a torrent of adrenaline flooding my body, my heart was pumping at full speed, I was petrified.

Loud stomping on the ground right next to the cabin made its structure tremble. The massive force that was being applied and its rhythmic nature were highly intimidating and beyond anything that I could associate with animals that you would usually expect to encounter in these forests - black bears, deer, cougars, wolves, rare elk. However, it clearly sounded like a wild living being. The heavy stomping was combined with the most horrifying vocalizations.

All sounds I could hear and feel were without doubt coming from one or two very large, strong and heavy creatures, and the only words I can find to describe their sounds and movements are: Wild, primeval, disturbingly erratic and deliberate all at once. The vocalisations sounded as if some creature was trying to articulate itself through speech but didn't have language in the same way as we do.

There were other noises too, like the sound of wood hitting wood, but it was hard to separate them from the overall turmoil in which the tremor of the ground and the vocalisations were the most prominent. The tremendous strength and energy that I could sense behind this riot was like nothing I had ever experienced.

Before my mind even started drawing conclusions my alert senses had understood the message right away: Clear out! Go away! Leave! I observed myself responding to this situation in the

Paddling in misty west coast air.

Ancient western red cedar.

"All sounds I could hear and feel were without doubt coming from one or two very large, strong and heavy creatures, and the only words I can find to describe their sounds and movements are: Wild, primeval, disturbingly erratic and deliberate all at once."

Left: Tofino harbour, Vancouver Island.

Below: Traditional Nuu chah Nulth First Nations 'wild man'/ Sasquatch mask, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, Canada.

> *"Hm, that rather sounds like Sasquatch (Bigfoot) to me.", he said. "I hear stories from people up and around here who see them with boulders on the shoreline."*

most primeval ways that I didn't even know existed until then. The intensity and physical character of this fear were uncharted territory in my personal horizon of experience. I didn't have to make up my mind, I knew right away that I had to respect this message.

After about 10 seconds of this turmoil I could sense and hear two bipedal creatures, one slightly more light-footed than the other, taking a few big strides while producing some strange subtle vocalisations. And again, each emphatic footfall made the ground and cabin tremble. The enormous weight and strength combined with tremendous speed and agility that I could sense were impressive and horrifying at once. Were they leaving?

At that point I could not take any more. In fear of death I pressed my hands against my ears as hard as I could. I was lying under my sleeping bag in the darkness, every muscle in my body strained, and I was covered in cold sweat. There were two triangular glass windows right behind my head. I only would have had to turn and look outside, but it felt impossible. There was no curiosity left. In apprehension of feeling the tremor of more stomping I was afraid that they might go even further in their mission to scare me.

Hours passed and I was lying there, hands pressed against my ears, silently promising that I would leave as soon as the light of dawn helped me release my petrification. My previous outdoor adventures had often involved challenging situations, but this was incomparable, and my adventurous spirit faded. Finally I occasionally dared to lift one hand off an ear and started texting messages to my safety contact: "I NEED A PICKUP RIGHT AWAY. PLEASE SEND A FLOAT PLANE!!!" They didn't send off until about 7 am because I didn't have clear sky view where I was lying under the roof.

As soon as dawn started seeping into the cabin and I could hear the first birds outside, I carefully allowed my ears to fully listen and my eyes to see again. Around 7:30 am I felt ready to get up, slowly climbed down into the main living area and started packing the most necessary things. My hands were shaking, and I was exhausted. I still didn't dare to look outside. My only mission now was to leave as soon as possible.

Finally, I received a message back from my safety contact: "I'll send you a plane!" What a relief! Around 8:20 am I heard the float plane approaching far off in the distance and then descending into the fjord. I grabbed my bags, stepped outside and without another glance walked down to the water where I caught the pilot's attention with my red jacket. Five minutes later I boarded the plane.

"How are you doing?", the pilot asked me, obviously wondering why I needed to get picked up. "Oh... I'm alright. Just didn't feel safe here last night. The ground was shaking, and I heard the sounds of moving boulders. Might not be a good thing to be trapped in this spot in case of a bigger earthquake or landslide, right?"

There was no way I could tell him the truth without seeming crazy. While getting ready for take-off I noticed how his eyes were scanning the mountain slopes for signs of a landslide. He said that no earthquake reports or tsunami warnings had been issued, and then he started pressing me about the sounds that I had heard. Eventually I described them in more detail. "Hm, that rather sounds like Sasquatch (Bigfoot) to me.", he said. "I hear stories from people up and around here who see them with boulders on the shoreline."

The plane picked up speed, and soon we took off into a cloudy west coast morning. For the first time I saw the pristine forest covers, dramatic mountain ranges, river valleys and water currents of this magnificent wild corner of Clayoquot Sound from the air. I couldn't take my eyes off. A mere 4 hours ago my favourite place had taught me what fear is, and now I hopelessly fell in love with it all over again.

Just 15 minutes later we landed in the contrasting reality of Tofino's busy tourism village. A good friend of mine awaited me on the dock. He said: "I guess there is a good reason why the First Nations call that place 'Home of the Sasquatch'."

Sander Jain, based in Costa Rica, Tahiti and Tofino, B.C., Canada is an explorer and outdoor photojournalist with a focus on wilderness adventure, conservation, science and Natural History. To learn more about his adventures, work projects and publications, visit www.sanderjain.com / Instagram: @sanderjain

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TRAILBLAZING

YOUNGEST EVER FEMALE CLIMBER TO SUMMIT THE WORLD'S TALLEST MOUNTAINS

23-year-old mountaineer Adriana Brownlee has officially become the youngest ever female mountaineer to summit the fourteen 8000m peaks when she topped out on Shishapangma (8027m) on 9th October, 2024. She joined the exclusive list of 64 people to have ever officially climbed the fourteen peaks over 8000m.

The last climb wasn't without it's challenges with Adriana and her team temporarily losing the rope that had been fixed a few days before by the previous summit team and battling nausea on the final climb.

The final push was an emotional one. Adriana said: "I started to cry. I hadn't reached the summit yet, I couldn't even see it, but I knew it was going to happen. It took another hour before we reached the incredible summit. By this time it was just sunrise and we had a beautiful clear sky. "It was the most incredible moment. I cried again remembering that I had just summited all 14 8000m peaks and made history."

The summit also makes Adriana the second official British climber to summit all fourteen peaks (and first female). Adriana adds; "British explorers have always been breaking boundaries. I'm proud to set another world first and keep that tradition alive."

"I have always had a love and fascination with mountains for as long as I can remember."

Adriana's love of the mountains was clear from a young age, with her even handing in a primary school piece of homework saying that her dream was to 'be famous for climbing the highest mountain in the world', adding 'I have always liked mountains and especially high ones'.

Her passion for the outdoors was fuelled further when she completed the three peaks (Snowden, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis) in just 22 hours at the age of 8 with her father, Tony.

However, it was 31st May 2021, at the age of 20, when she fulfilled her childhood dream of summitting Mt Everest – setting in motion the journey to her record breaking achievement to be the youngest woman to climb the fourteen 8000m peaks.

Over the following three years, Adriana continued to set world firsts as she summited peak after peak, breaking two further records along the way including the youngest female in the world to summit K2 and the youngest person to summit Gasherbrum 1 without supplementary Oxygen.

For her last climb, Adriana wanted to summit without the use of oxygen – making it an even tougher challenge.

Adriana added; "It's all about intrinsic motivation for me and wanting to push my body and achieve my personal goals. Mountaineering is my escape in life, it makes me feel free and truly connected with myself so it becomes an obsession to go back."

"I hope to inspire youngsters all over the world that there is no set path in life. You can create your own destiny and journey which can be totally unique to you if that's what makes you happy.

"I quit university and my degree to pursue a career in mountaineering and sacrificed friendships, regular teenage life and more, but it was all worth it."

Having achieved the ultimate goal in mountaineering, what is left for Adriana to achieve? She replied; "I will stay in the mountains, but now want to help others achieve their dream by creating a new generation of high altitude mountaineering and trekking experiences which focuses on safety and clients' past experiences."

To find out more about Adriana and her achievements, visit @Adri.brownlee on Instagram.

"I would like to be famous for climbing the highest mountain in the world. It is called Mount Everest and it is over 8800m tall. It is in the Himalaya Range on the border of Nepal and Tibet.

The goal I would have achieved would be to have climbed the higest mountain and be one of the youngest girls to do this."

Excerpt taken
from a piece
of homework
Adriana
completed at
primary school!

PAYBACK TIME

BUSH BASHING FOR THE FUTURE

By Eric Skilling

Ahead of me Steve was moving across the steep slope like an expert, effortlessly picking his way around supplejack vines, lush ferns, and fallen logs. Meanwhile, I was noisily stumbling and staggering my way through the shrubbery like a lost and desperate drunk. I could not see the point in stopping to refresh bait stations – my raucous approach must have frightened any local pests to death by now.

Precious cargo of Kokako snugly secure

It did not need to be like this. We could have chosen a line of more accessible traps. I did wonder if this was a test, but Steve reassured me that he regularly walked this line of stations, checking and replenishing baits. Clearly it was time to toughen up.

Looking for motivation, I reminded myself why this project was so important. Thirty years ago, there were just two breeding pairs of kōkako remaining in this forest; today there are over two-hundred and fifty. This was payback time for the birdcalls I had enjoyed over years of tramping. I scrambled up to reach the next bait station.

Having already reached the container, Steve had prised it open and was inspecting the two bags of pellets inside. “About 90 grams I reckon” he said, not really wanting my opinion. “We’ll add another bag.” He then handed me another small bag which I slipped into the container, reattached the lid, and made sure it was secure against the tree.

Meanwhile, Steve brought up the appropriately named “Trap.NZ” app on his phone, accessed the map, and tapped the numbered triangle identifying this station. This opened a busy screen where he used a sliding scale to record the initial weight of the remaining baits, and the quantity he had added. “That’s twelve down, eight to go” he cheerfully added, turned, and headed towards the next red triangle marking the trail.

It is difficult to articulate the success of conservation efforts in the Hunua Ranges, or more specifically, the Kōkako Management Area (KMA). Attributing that success is even more difficult because, to misquote a famous foreign PM, so much is owed to so many. Appreciating the professionalism, investment in terms of gear and tech, and, most importantly, the obvious passion of all those involved – both paid and volunteer - is beyond measure. And this is only one of many, many successful conservation projects around New Zealand.

Our day began with a pre-dawn drive to the Hunua Ranges an hour or so south of Auckland. Walking into the “Operations Room” was like stepping back into the seventies – an unlined garage flooded with light from overhead fluorescent tubes. Against the walls makeshift desks, shelves and wallboards neatly loaded with gear, maps, pictures, planning boards, a tub of R/Ts, a tea/coffee area, and off to one side, a table covered with bins containing bags of blue pellets. Local ranger, Ruth Cordey - seated on an upturned log upholstered with a tea towel – was poring over a busy map. “This must be the KMA executive suite” I thought to myself.

Ruth looked up, gave us all a warm smile, and greeted us like long lost friends. The camaraderie between my two companions, both with years of experience as volunteers, and Ruth was palpable. Undoubtedly, there was plenty of mutual respect between the rangers and the volunteers. After some friendly banter we gathered around the map and Ruth highlighted a line labelled “PTA” for Steve and I, and another named “K” for Bert. We gathered bags of baits each and set off up the Kohukohunui Track.

After arriving at a junction pointing to the “local café,” and the trig station on the summit of Kohukohunui, Steve checked his GPS location on the app, found a marker labelled “PTA,” walked past another sign labelled “NO ENTRY,” and set off down a steep, bush clad, and barely discernible path.

The organisation and technology behind the operation is impressive. A series of red triangular pointers, attached to trees at regular intervals, mark out the trail. Each bait station, spring trap and cage trap along the line are sequentially numbered and signposted with a yellow marker. Every trail, and the designated number and GPS location of every trap and bait station have been meticulously recorded on a topo map within the Trap.NZ app.

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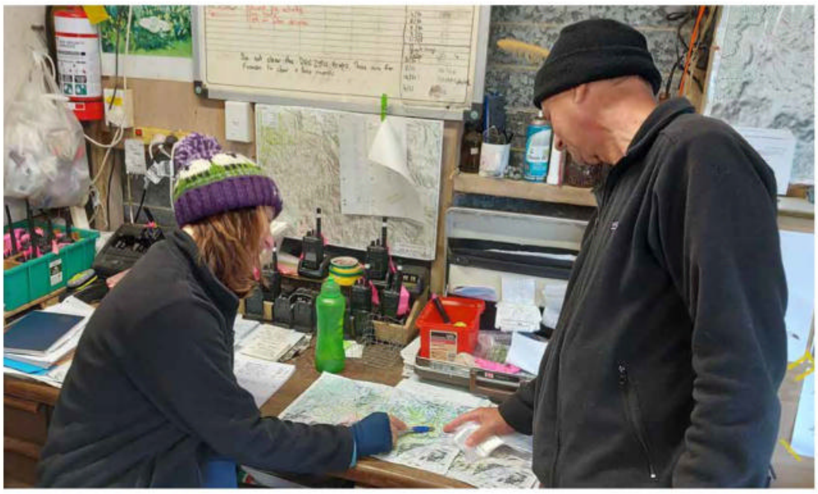

Steve and Ruth planning out the days trapping. Hunua

One less predator. Hunua

“Without the help of our army volunteers [the project] would not be possible."

Details of the number of pellets remaining and added at each location, and notes on each unfortunate victim trapped, are also recorded in the app, providing vital data for analysis.

Having travelled almost twelve km and accumulating over six hundred metres elevation, it took us three hours to check the twenty locations on the PTA trail. Considering there are 4,845 stations and 404 traps in the Hunuas, that equates to around eight hundred hours to visit all stations just once. To put that in perspective, during nesting season or periods of heightened predator activity, lines are investigated at least once a fortnight. That amounts to a sobering number of hours each year. In the words of a senior manager in Auckland Council “without the help of our army volunteers [the project] would not be possible."

Is it worth it? During the last 12-month period, nine hundred and ninety-one introduced predators, each individual capable of killing hundreds of birds, were eradicated. Amazingly, that number does not include other invaders that have arrived, feasted on the pellets, and expired in a dark corner of the forest.

Dealing to foreign marauders is obviously important, but f if they are to thrive, native birds need habitats more akin to their original home. Most indigenous birdlife has not adapted to modern urban and rural life as well as introduced species such as the pigeon, Myna bird, and sparrow.

Much of the Hunua Ranges consists of regenerating native bush. Moss and lichen cover the forest floor, native flax, ferns, horopito/pepper tree, kanuka and supplejack are abundant in the mid-layers of the forest, with tawa, miro, kauri and other podocarps making a shady canopy. Pine trees that stand stark in their rigid rows alongside the KMA are now a threatened species as they are due to be felled and replaced with indigenous vegetation. Thanks again goes to the commitment of so many organisations and individuals.

Today, visitors get to enjoy the rich, deep, and almost mournful, but nevertheless magnificent, calls of over five hundred kōkako, accompanied by calls of the kākā, robin, tomtit/miromiro, and bellbird that now call the Hunua Ranges home.

However, the KMA is only one of numerous places across New Zealand where we can commit to some payback. From personal experience I know that spectacular success has already been achieved on tracks such as The Old Ghost Road, Milford, Abel Tasman, Richmond Range, Lake Tarawera, Nelson Lakes, Pureora, Whirinaki, Cape Brett, Kawekas, and Sanctuary Mountain. I know there are other regions where remarkable transformations have been accomplished.

Already world-renowned for its dramatic terrain, beautiful forests and well-placed huts, the Old Ghost Road trail in the South Island also offers adventurers much more thanks to its predator control. Six thousand stoats, weasels, rats, and mice were eradicated on the track over a five-year period, using over nine hundred traps and tens of thousands of hours donated by volunteers. Now, visitors get to enjoy sightings of Great Spotted Kiwi along the trails, abundance of whio in the tributaries, and appreciate calls of kākā, kea, kererū and riflemen/titipounamu.

Old Man Hut in the Richmond range offers a dawn chorus so raucous that it will leave you wondering if this is how New Zealand must have sounded a thousand years ago. Weka are so prolific on the Abel Tasman trail they have reasserted themselves as the dominant creature, especially adept at plundering tents, packs, and lunch tables from inattentive humans.

Unfortunately, in other regions of New Zealand the only sounds are the rustle of the trees, and cascading streams and rivers. Swathes of our forests can be scarily silent. Thankfully, there are more places where you nod off to sleep to the shrill cry of weka, the two-syllable hoot of the morepork/ruru, and the silence-shattering call of a kiwi. Then you wake up to a glorious crescendo of calls welcoming in the day, too abundant to identify any individual singer.

Journeys always seem shorter when a diminutive pīwakawaka flits and darts from tree to tree beside you. During a lunch stop between huts in Nelson Lakes, I can still recall the tickle of the twig-like feet of a robin that had hopped onto my leg hoping for a share of our meal.

Those are priceless moments that make great memories. The truth is the opportunity to experience these moments only happens because of the passion of thousands of professionals and volunteers. It is payback time for us all; our turn to show appreciation for those efforts by doing the mahi - making it possible for our native birds to not just survive, but to thrive.

I choose to use Jetboil, Backcountry, Merrell and Macpac products.

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Georgia Astle, Robin Goomes, and Casey Brown on the podium during the women's final at Red Bull Rampage in St. George, Utah
Image by Christian Pondella / Red Bull Content Pool

RAMPAGING KIWI

ROBIN GOOMES SHREDS HER WAY TO VICTORY

The Red Bull Rampage—famed for testing the limits of the world's top big-mountain riders—made history with the debut of its women's competition. Seven fearless freeride athletes dropped into the rugged terrain of Virgin, Utah, and left no doubt that women's mountain biking has reached a whole new level of gnarliness. When the dust settled, Rotorua's own Robin Goomes claimed the top spot with a line that packed a serious punch.

Kiwi, Goomes, stunned the judges with her bold riding, including not one but two massive backflips that had jaws dropping across the desert floor. Her performance earned her 85 points and the Utah Sports Commission's Best Trick Award, a sweet bonus for the Kiwi.

But it wasn't just the flips—Goomes stomped a jaw-dropping 41-foot drop and cleaned a sketchy technical chute that screamed classic Rampage. Her run was a throwback to the raw, gritty style that has made Rampage legendary, and she owned every second of it.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet," Goomes said after her epic win.

> *"It's been a wild journey, and I'm just stoked for my crew. They've gone all out for me. Honestly, I feel like I've done this for them, for the sport, and for all the other riders out here pushing the limits."*

Goomes wasn't the only one lighting it up, though. Canada's Georgia Astle, who didn't even expect to be competing, found herself landing in second place. A last-minute call-up in September put her on the start list, and she rose to the challenge with authority. Her clean execution of a 41-foot drop and smooth navigation of the technical sections earned her a solid 79 points.

Freeride icon Casey Brown, often dubbed the godmother of the sport, rounded out the podium in third with a score of 77.33. Brown had the crowd on edge with her terrifying rock roll drop dubbed the "Laundry Chute"—one of the sketchiest features she's ever tackled. Her efforts also earned her the McGazza Spirit Award, recognizing her relentless drive and pivotal role in shaping women's freeride.

But the action didn't stop there. Vaea Verbeeck took home the Samsung Galaxy Trailblazer Award for her creative line, and Argentina's Cami Nogueria snagged the BFGoodrich Tires Toughness Award after throwing down a gutsy 51-foot drop in practice, despite not making it to the finals. And let's not forget Vinny Armstrong, another Kiwi sensation, whose dig crew earned the DECKED Digger Award for crafting one of the event's most visually stunning runs.

"I love my team, and they absolutely nailed it," said Armstrong, thrilled to share the stage with her brother, who was part of her dig team. "They brought the energy, and the run was just unreal. Couldn't have asked for better support."

Robin Goomes cleans her line and places first at Red Bull Rampage in Virgin Utah October
Image by Emily Tidwell / Red Bull Content Pool

"The future of women's freeride mountain biking just got redefined."

Red Bull
RAMPAGE

> *"The Red Bull Rampage – famed for testing the limits of the world's top big-mountain riders – made history with the debut of its women's competition"*

Winner, Kiwi athlete, Robin Goomes
Image by Bartek Wolinski
Red Bull Content Pool

Red Bull
RAMPAGE

TALES FROM THE TAIL END

NICK LAURIE COMPLETES THE TAUPO ULTRAMARATHON 100K

If you have taken the time to read some of my previous stories you will deduce that I didn't just wake up one day and decide to run 100 kilometres. It has been a gradual build up much like boiling a frog. I started trail running during the COVID lockdown and discovered a new sense of freedom and love for the outdoors. Gradually I have increased from little 30-minute trots through the local bush, to the Total sport trail races on the outskirts of Auckland, to a helicopter drop into the Kaimanawas, to the Routeburn and Kepler Tracks, and finally to the Taupo Ultra.

I am a Chiropractor for my real job and this crazy step up to 100k came after a conversation with a patient. I was helping Anna get back into running after a CrossFit injury had curtailed her running for a while. Little did I know I was looking after a legendary runner who had won the 75k Taupo distance the previous year along with many other achievements in athletics. Trying to find something in common I mentioned that I had run the 50k the same year as she had won and could remember her boosting past me as the 75k elites caught us plodders who had a 25k head start. I spoke about how this year that I was going to go back and repeat the race and get my pacing right. She then posed a question. Why don't you take your lessons and apply them to a new race? She said that I would find that more inspiring. I thought about the 75 for a fleeting moment but then thought to myself, self, a hundy would be a touch more epic. Quickly, before I changed my mind, I took the first step and upgraded my entry to the big one. Holy Shit thanks Anna.

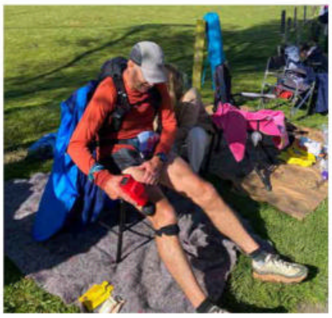
Right. It was time to google how to run 100k. I needed to hit a series of milestones. I found the best way to keep this interesting was to map out some events and tick them off. I entered the Total Sport trail series that gave me 6 events over 6 months on varying types of terrain. The Taupo, and then the North Shore Marathons would give me a bit of pressure over a longer distance and Cape Kidnappers Trail race was a great hit out 2 weeks before the main event where the focus was running/walking to heart rate/ maintaining a sustained effort. Every one of these races provided lessons. One big one was to remember my shoes. 30 minutes before the start of a trail race I was frantically scampering around trying to find something to run in when one of the boys lent me a pair of road shoes, not ideal for mud, that his wife had found in the Op Shop.

My training runs stepped up to next level. Stuff that I had never thought that I would be capable of. I completed 5, 6, 7 then a 9.5 hour runs on trails and bush around the North Shore of Auckland. Another of my favourites was to run the Paeroa to Waihi rail trail, out and back that gave me an opportunity to have time on my feet without the terrain being too gruelling where I could practice and experiment with fuelling strategies. I would You Tube fuelling suggestions and then go out and try them. In hindsight here, I had a "what do they know" moment with this and because I had never gone past 10 hours, I didn't realise that the stomach becomes a different animal at this point. I purposely spent most of my days on my feet knowing that I had a big day ahead and I wanted to be used to just standing for long periods. Walking was also a skill that needed to be mastered and I practiced walking a bit faster and more efficiently.

I did learn about gear during these times. You need firm soled but cushioned trail shoes. Step up the Merrell Agility Peak 5s. A great trail shoe with awesome grip that was ideal for the Taupo trails. Late in the race these came in handy with rutted rocky bike trails in the dark. I had plenty of grip and did not fall once. I learned that you could almost fool your body by changing your shoes and socks at the 50k mark before the feet started swelling. I filed this gem away and added it to my race plan. I had a great running vest, the Camelbak Apex Pro which my crew could easily tuck away my food and drink at each aid station. It could also easily stow the compulsory safety gear. I had some great trail running shorts with heaps of zips so that I could tuck gels and empty packets into and a variety of tops for different temperatures. I started in a thicker thermal, when it was cold and then moved to a thinner one for the midday heat. I had learned from the Cape Kidnappers race that long sleeves were required for sun protection and that a breathable hat was a must. I moisturised my feet and any other moving parts in order to finish chafe free.

MERRELL
84
NICK

84
100km
REGISTRATIO
ACERS



9-year-old Oke ran with me for a while, what a great distraction. | Getting an adjustment | Much needed aid station | Massaging the quads | The day before | Gear prep

All my research gave me an insight into what was ahead. There were a few things that I didn't quite understand the level of their importance until the day. The key 3 were:

1. Accountability, why am I doing this?
2. Your mind is important
3. Pay attention to the little things before they become big things.

With all of the training done, now it was time to celebrate with a taper and a couple of sleep ins to prepare for the big day. I took the Friday off work so that I wasn't on my feet all day before and so that I could save up a few Zs. Sarah and I went out for a big breakfast before going over to pick up my daughter Sophie who was finishing work at lunchtime so that we could be in Taupo for the pre-race briefing. Sophie had volunteered to pace me for the last 25k. She has run a bit in the past and did the Routeburn Track with me, so I knew that she was quite capable. After 75k I was hardly going to be sprinting away from her!

We arrived at the Taupo events centre for the briefing, race pack pick up and the pre-race weigh in. The weigh in is an important part of ultra-competitions as you can sometimes over hydrate and your kidneys can stop working properly. At the end of the race, if you weigh more than your pre-race weight then you must go under medical supervision as you have some kidney damage. I don't usually weigh myself so was excited to see what all this training had done. If I get under 90kg I am at my best race weight and was a bit shocked to see 87.5kgs. That was the lightest that I have been since high school!

> *"At the end of the race, if you weigh more than your pre-race weight then you must go under medical supervision as you have some kidney damage."*

I didn't pay attention at the race briefing where 2 important pieces of information were given. Some inspirational quotes from Sir Peter Blake about the power of the mind and the details of getting to the start line. Small things, I guess. I googled where the start was and thought all the other words were just waffle. I did cry a bit watching the highlight videos from last year.

We left the briefing and then went to have my traditional Taupo pre-race dinner at the Lone Star. The owners of Adventure magazine had kindly offered us their batch to stay in, in Turangi, which according to my calculations was only 30 minutes from the start line. The start time was 5:30 which one of my mentors, Michelle from Shoe Science, described as "dark o'clock" and if we went straight to the start that would save me having to get on the 4am bus from Taupo. Simple as that.

We got down to Turangi and went through an aid station practice. I was going to need Sarah and Sophie to help me refuel and recover at 3 points in the race, 30k, 50k and then 75k. We put a chair in the middle of the lounge room and went through a drill. I gave instructions on how many gels, cookies and electrolytes that they were to put into my vest at each stop. After being married for 30 years I know that spouses don't love instructions - but it had to be done. I had filled a storage container with all the necessary supplies; GU gels and electrolyte tabs, Ems cookies and water. Sophie worked out that I didn't have enough gels and bananas but Sarah would have time between stops to head into Taupo and get some. With 1100 ultra runners in town most of the GU gels in Taupo had been snapped up but Sarah was able to get a couple. There were no yellow bananas at Pak n Save and she asked the produce manager to check out the back. Being rural NZ he kindly obliged and the crisis was averted.

I set my alarm for 3:45 and had a very nervous restless sleep. After a quick breakfast I put the start address in to google maps, I realised something was wrong when it came up with travel time of 50 mins instead of 30. I had allowed a buffer but would have to beat google to get to the start on time. The gods did shine on me as a bus had got stuck in the turn around area and the race was held up by 30 minutes. I had time for my pre-race Portaloo and joined the tailenders as the gun went. It was cold and I was grateful that I hadn't had to stand around too long.

The start was a bit of an anticlimax as we all had to shuffle slowly across a suspension bridge. I suppose that this certainly kept my heart rate down which was the plan for the first 50k. We headed out along the single track which was beautiful to run on. Polar opposite to the Routeburn Track that we had raced on earlier this year. This was nice and smooth with berms. During the first 25k section on these lovely trails I couldn't stop myself trying to race and passed as many as I could to work my way up through the field. I had heart rate parameters that did reign me in but the mind at this stage was set on not having to use my headtorch at the end of the race. This was a mental mistake - too many steps ahead before stuff like that would be decided. The camaraderie was legendary. Everyone would let you pass and wish you a great day as you went by. This was my favourite section of the race.

Taking on a huge run like 100k requires some mental trickery. I needed to break the beast down into small achievable pieces. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. The first bite was running in the dark for 30 minutes until the sun came up and we could see some beautiful waterfalls flowing into the Waihaha Stream. I stayed in heartrate zone 2 where I wouldn't be creating too much lactate that would fatigue my muscles. The second bite was to run aid station to aid station. There were 10 of these on the course. Mentally I got this wrong by focussing on the 3 where I would see my crew. This put my mind too far ahead which then communicated to my body that it was a long way. I should have kept it small and simple.

We came out of the Waihaha section and ran across a couple of farms. The farmers had kindly mown a strip for us to run on and it felt nice. The grass was lush and typically very green and if I was a vegan, I would have been very excited. I instead loved seeing the spring lambs. Leading into the 30k aid station at Hingarae Rd I started being passed by a few competitors and had to resist all temptation to go with them. Mentally, however, it messed with me because when someone passes me, I dwell on how shit I feel. 2 competitors pulled out at this point. I was quite fresh,

> *"Sophie was taking a video of me running off and you can hear her utter "fuck" as I toddled off."*

despite the shit thoughts, at this stage and ran to the chair and blanket that the girls had set up. Apparently as they were laying out the gear another runner's support crew were right beside them following similar instructions. They had some fun banter while doing this. I was eating a gel at the half past mark and an Ems cookie on the hour. At this point I had had 3 of each and the stomach was great. The crew loaded me up, told me to breathe and sent me on my way. I would see them again in 20 kilometres having run a marathon and a bit.

The highlight of the day was that my daughter Sophie was pacing me.

The next section involved crossing some rutty farmland then on to some forestry tracks and roads, then an 8k gravel road incline followed by a hilly 7k on sealed road. The 40k point claimed 5 more competitors at this point. It is a mental challenge to go beyond the marathon distance. I started to feel it and knew what was to come.

I had previously run this section as part of a relay team and had been mentally preparing for the 8k gravel road/hill climb. There was a nice moment in the forest where we did an out and back section (which is not an ultrarunners dream) and could see competitors in front and behind us. I remember a guy in a chief's singlet giving me a high five as we crossed paths.

We left the forestry roads and hit the climb. A Chiropractic colleague had said that he would drive to watch me run this section, so I got into slow shuffle mode and took on the beast. I kept it going the whole way up and did pass quite a few runners. I got to the sealed section, and it was like the elephant had jumped on my shoulders. Mental mistake, I had treated the gravel road as an end point and my mind told my body this. I was able to get going on the downhills and flats, but the hills had my mental measure. If I ever go back, I am sure that these are quite runnable but not in my mental state that day.

It was an eerie feeling running onto the airstrip as I had only previously been there on very busy occasions like the start of the 50k last year. It was a bit ghost townish as there were only the 100k runners coming through sporadically. I decided to take my time here and change my shirt and shoes and socks. I hadn't pulled my socks on tight enough when I had but them on at 3:54am and was getting a blister on my big toe. Pay attention to small things. I pulled the nice fresh ones on and made sure that they were snug fitting. I replenished my gels and cookies and when I moved, I had my first cramp attack. Out came the pickle juice and I had my first shot. This settled the cramp down straight away but wreaked havoc with my gel and cookie laden stomach. I also got my spine checked and adjusted by Sindre from Lake Taupo Chiropractic. He had run a couple of adventurous runs with me in the past but was not running on this day because of dancing with the star's commitments! He jumped at the chance to get involved and put me on his table and lit me up. I genuinely felt a real rush afterwards and fully expect that this will soon be outlawed as it is performance enhancing.

I got up put my vest back on and walked then slowly ran towards Kinloch. Sophie made a mistake here telling me that I was leading my age group, and I began to panic that I would slip off the podium. I didn't really have to worry about that as there were only 3 in my age group so all I had to do was finish. This messed with my mind, and I felt threatened rather than just focussing on a nice rhythm. She was taking a video of me running off and you can hear her utter "fuck" as I toddled off. I was hurting but could soon muster a good shuffle. It was mostly downhill single trail for 18k towards Kinloch. Heartbreakingly we had lost 5 more competitors at the airstrip who just could not get going again. This is one thing that enabled me to walk then run out of the aid station - I had been training for a year to do this and I didn't want to have to do all of that again. I really feel for the DNFers because we were all just a slip, fall, tear or meltdown from joining them. We would lose more at Kinloch and sadly someone even had to retire at 92k. Now that would suck.

The trail down towards Kinloch was another favourite part of the terrain. I had another running battle with a guy who would overtake me then sit on a rock and let me pass then repeat about 3 times. We both had a chuckle. Then it was time for me to join the Y train. Two runners from the Y marathon club shuffled past and I was able to tag along with them until Kinloch. Misery loves company and we all pushed and pulled each other until the out and back section at the Whangamata stream. At this point the head games really began. I had my daughter Sophie waiting to pace me at Kinloch. I was going to let her down. All of my patients and Facebook followers were going to see a failure. I was going too slow. I would have to use my headtorch again. I would have to train like an idiot for another year.

I worked myself up into such an irrational point that I walked out of the aid station at Lisland Rd and sat on the kerb and bawled my eyes out. I took my phone out and phoned Sarah to tell her that I was done. She was only around the corner and jumped in the car and rocked up to talk me through this. Her first solution was to breathe-properly. This changes the brain, and I became more rational. She then reminded me that I chose this. I put on my big boy pants and started to shuffle. I

"I really feel for the DNFers because we were all just a slip, fall, tear or meltdown from joining them. "

asked her to get some tape for my blisters, some sparkling water for my guts and that I would see her at the 75k aid station.

Then, just like my prayers were being answered the Y train came shuffling along and I joined on. This got me up towards the turnaround, but the mental battle was still raging. My friend Sindre, who lives in Kinloch, pulled up with all his kids in the car and kindly asked me what I needed. I told him that I was broken which was then parroted from the back seat. Hearing this from a 2-year-old gave me a new perspective and it was a metaphorical slap that got me focussed on the task at hand. Get to Kinloch. Sindre then told his 9-year-old boy Oke to run with me. What a great distraction. Oke educated me on why trout swim upstream, told a few very poor jokes, that did extract a laugh, and explained how he often drank from the Whangamata Stream. Before we knew it, we were jogging into the Kinloch aid station at 75k. His reward was a couple of jet planes from the food table, and I feasted on boiled potatoes with lots of salt.

Sarah had set up my chair and blanket and Sindre and Josie McMaster worked on taping up my blistering toe. The taping was magnificent and did the trick. I rubbed a bit of fisiocream into my suffering knee and got adjusted once more. A couple of swigs of sparkling water and I was ready to go. I had a vest full of gels and cookies. The highlight of the day was that my daughter Sophie was pacing me. She put her arm around me and told me that “we got this.” We didn’t start well, heading off in the wrong direction, but after a course correction, we headed for the hilliest section of the race. I now had 2 goals - beat the cut off for the headland loop, then finish. I had 3 hours to do 8k. I wasn’t taking it for granted.

The headland between Kinloch and Whakaipo Bay was divided into 3 sections. We had an 8K climb up to the aid station, a 10k loop (down then back up again) then an 8k section which was mostly down to the finish. Our plan was to walk the hills and then unleash the roaring lion on the downhills. The roaring lion was a newborn kitten for the first couple of hours while I battled cramp when I tried to stride out. We safely made the cut off before the 10k loop and I celebrated by having a cup of coke. The best tasting drink of my life. Sophie was legendary during this rough patch telling me that I was strong and powerful. She kept chanting this and tucked her hand into the small of my back and pushed me up the hills. I hope that this doesn’t warrant disqualification because I’m not doing it again. My stomach at this stage was terrible and all that I wanted to do was burp or fart. The ultrarunners creed states that you never trust a fart, so I began to scope out a good spot in the bush to risk one with my shorts clear of the firing range. We were passed at this stage by Rainbow and Michele who were doing the 75k race. I asked if they had any toilet paper and Rainbow managed to find a postage-stamp sized moisture wipe. All was good I just had to be accurate. The camaraderie on the trails was amazing. After sorting out my stomach and hand digging a decent hole, we were underway again. We passed Michele and rainbow again and thanked them. I then started to suffer a bit more and slowed at dusk when we put on our headlamps. Michele and Rainbow passed us again wishing us all the best.

My target at this point was to leave the headland loop and get to the last 8k stretch down to the finish. I kept hearing voices thinking that the aid station would just pop up around the corner. We celebrated every kilometre that ticked over on my Garmin because it was a PB in distance ever run! Every alert was greeted by Sophie shouting PB. Finally, we made it to the aid station where I replenished my water and electrolytes not really knowing how long this 8k was going to take us. Sophie confided in me afterwards that she had hoped that I would get a move on because she was getting cold. She didn’t say a negative thing until we crossed the line. A great pacer.

With the finish not too far away the power of the mind became evident. I was able to run cramp free and put on what I thought was an Ethiopian like pace. The Garmin stats did not back up this myth. We were trucking and passed Rainbow and Michele who cheered us on. That really gave me a lift. We passed another runner who was suffering from blisters, and I was grateful for my tape job. The sweetest sound was the finish announcer’s voice travelling through the bush and we knew that we weren’t too far away. We finally hit the reserve area and walked the road section summoning some strength for the all-important finish photo. I dropped and did a few press-ups for good measure. What an emotional time. I had started at 6am and it was now 9.30pm. What an epic day.

I then went for the safety weigh in. 7.5kg under my normal weight but 5kg down on the previous night. There are easier ways to shed a few kilos. I had a celebratory beer and sat reflecting on a major lifetime accomplishment. It wasn’t long before the reflection was curtailed by shivering and we had to head off back to Turangi for a hot bath and some soup. I had walked more than I would have liked and the speed that I was able to run at the end indicated that it wasn’t a lack physical capabilities but rather losing a bit of the mental aspect. The winner did 8h13 and I came in at 15h31, the fastest in my age group.

TAUPŌ ULTRA FINISH
JOHN WEST

Such a great feeling crossing hte finish line, thanks to my wonderful support crew, particularly Sarah and Sophie

Red Bull HOMERUN
YETI
190
179
155
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HOME RUN 2024

THE CRAZIEST MASS-PARTICIPANT SNOW RACE
QUEENSTOWN 2024

Images by Graeme Murray / Red Bull Content Pool

On Saturday, 21 September, Queenstown's iconic Red Bull Homerun delivered its signature brand of high-octane chaos at The Remarkables. With 250 skiers and snowboarders charging from the mountain's summit to its base at breakneck speeds, the event again proved why it's known as the wildest mass-participant snow race around in New Zealand.

The sold-out spectacle was a roaring success, featuring lightning-fast runs, outrageous costumes, and an electric fun atmosphere. It was the ultimate season-closer, blending fierce competition with pure, unfiltered snow fun.

YETI
Red Bull HOMERUN
190

> *"It's epic every time. This is what the end of the season is all about – sending it down the hill and celebrating with everyone."*

Record-Breaking Runs and Wacky Costumes

Willis Feasey claimed the title of fastest skier, completing the descent in an astonishing 1 minute, 34 seconds. Not far behind, José Luis Vázquez Tenorio secured the fastest snowboarder accolade with a time of 2 minutes, 13 seconds. Their blistering speeds set the tone for a day filled with adrenaline and laughter, as participants in everything from superhero suits to inflatable animal costumes stormed down the slopes.

This year marked the triumphant return of the event after previous stops in 2019 and 2022. The Remarkables joined an elite roster of global mountain venues, from Sweden to Canada, that have also hosted this unique race.

Olympic gold medallist Nico Porteous, raved about the event:

"It's epic every time. This is what the end of the season is all about—sending it down the hill and celebrating with everyone. Whether you're a pro or it's your first time on snow, Homerun's got something for you. Plus, where else can you bomb down a hill without worrying about losing your pass?!"

Also local snow stars downhill racer Alice Robinson and snowboarder Cool Wakushima, hit the slopes, adding extra star power to the already stacked lineup.

As expected, when the race concluded, the vibe transitioned seamlessly into an unforgettable après party. From live music to ice-cold beverages, the celebrations kept the energy high long after the final racer crossed the finish line.

The Winners

Ski Male:
1. Willis Feasey – 1:34
2. Angus Wills – 1:37
3. Fynn Powell – 1:40

Ski Female:
1. Chelsea Wallace – 2:18
2. Caitlin Feasey – 2:18
3. Sophie Grunshaw – 2:20

Snowboard Male:
1. José Luis Vázquez Tenorio – 2:13
2. Victor Ruiz – 2:14
3. Oto Higuchi – 2:15

Snowboard Female:
1. Anna Hiden – 2:40
2. Noti Kepa – 2:42
3. Allison MacDougall – 2:45

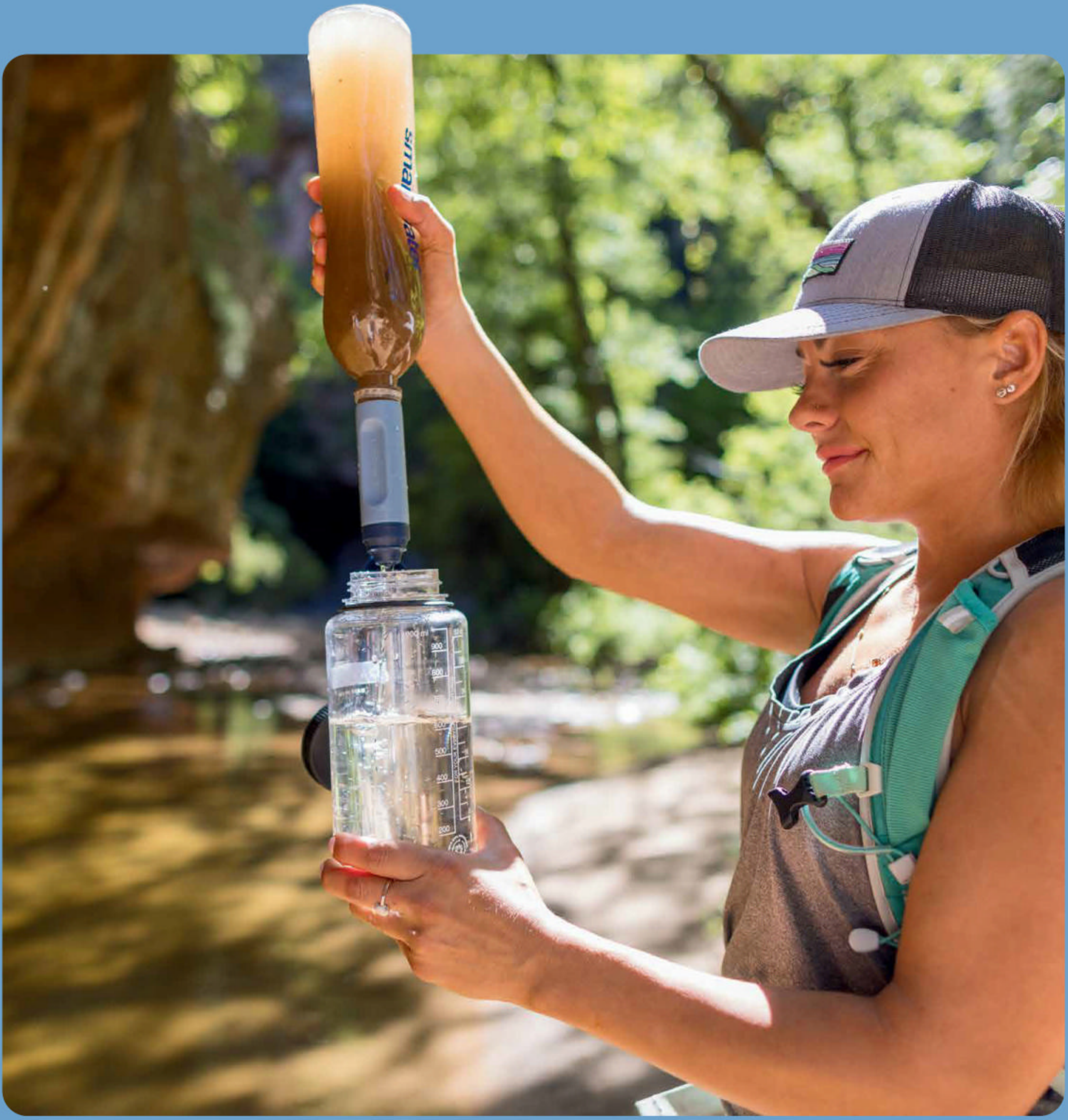

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Image courtesy of Whistler Tourism

WHISTLER

THE BIKE MECCA OF CANADA

By Phil Clark | Mad about Travel

There are a few things that make up the best mountain biking in the world. Friends, terrain & town and Whistler has all of these in spades. In New Zealand our biking mecca is Rotorua, in Canada it's Whistler!

Whistler is one of the largest resorts in North America, with some of the best lift-accessed park riding with epic downhills and wicked cross country trails. Plus an abundance of lakes and parks where you can swim, hang out on a beach and hire kayaks or paddle boards.

With two villages that give you the choice of Whistler's bright lights or Creekside's mellow pubs and cafes. Canadian hospitality means even if you're there on your own it won't be for long. We love staying at Creekside as it's a bit quieter than Whistler Village, has a nice atmosphere, direct gondola to the top of the bike park and is close to 2 beautiful lakes.

The terrain is huge with over 4900 vertical feet of lift-serviced trails separated into four main zones:

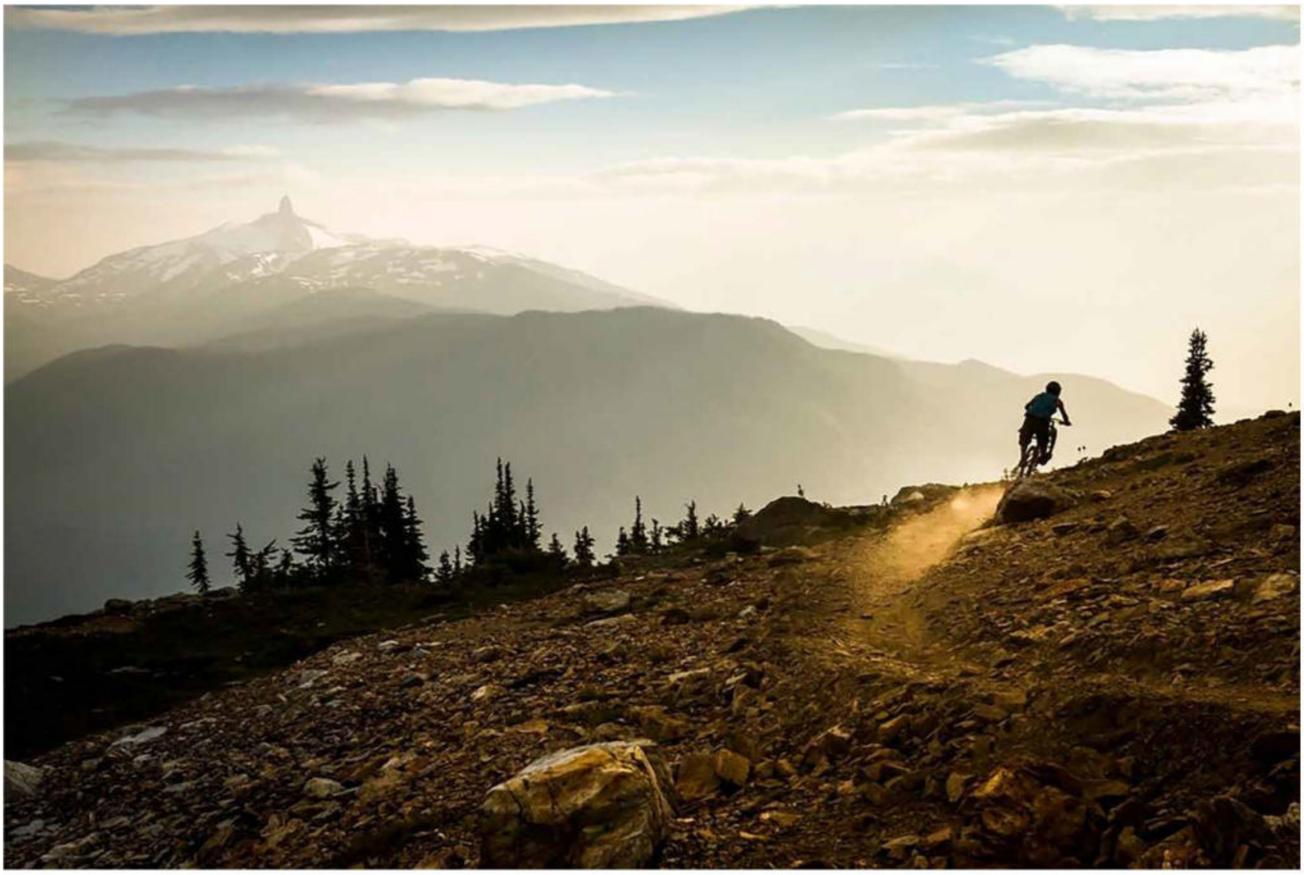
Fitzsimmons Zone
The original and the best, containing trails of all levels, the Fitz is where biking dreams become real. Home to Whistlers' most famous lines, A line, B line, Dirt Merchant, Canadian Open DH and 5 skills centres this zone is a must ride.

Garbanzo Zone
Known as the big brother of Fitz, this zone is above the Fitz zone and caters to high-level riders with steeper technical terrain on trails like Goats Gully, as well as long flow trails with jump features like Blue Velvet.

Creek Zone
The newest zone is accessed directly from the Creekside Gondola and is recommended for advanced and expert riders. This zone can be used to ride back down to Creekside or access the Fitz or Garbanzo

Peak Zone
For advanced riders, requiring an extra lift and ticket. This is a must ride area for at least one day as it gives you 5,000 feet of vertical descent from the top of Whistler Peak. The Top of the World trail starts at 2182m and descends 736m over 6km through Whistler's stunning alpine environment.

Another trail you can do is Top of the World to Khyber, Kashmir, Kush and Big Timber which is 16km's, with 1857m of descent from the top of Whistler to the Creekside base! Epic!



“The great thing about mountain biking is that it can be done anywhere, with just about any bike, all you need is a bunch of mates, good terrain and a place to drink beer and tell lies afterwards!"

Beyond Whistler Bike Park there is a maze of cross-country trails to explore. It’s best to hit up a local bike shop for the most up-to-date map or download Trail Forks on your phone so you don’t get lost. Local ratings do err on the hard side so if you’re riding blue’s expect them to feel like black trails. With 250km’s of trails, it’s easy to find something for everyone.

Lost Lake Trails
Just 5 minute’s ride from Whistler this area has some excellent trails which naturally join up to make a loop. Try Tin Pants, Fountain of Love, Pinocchio’s Furniture, Jelly Gum Drop Roll, Central Scrutinizer, Grand Wazoo and finish off at the lake for a swim.

Westside
Cascading down Sproatt Mountain, Whistlers westside includes classic single track like Danimal, Lord of the Squirrels and AC/DC. It is accessed by climbing Flank Trail from Lake Alta.

Whistler North
Starting just north of the village surrounding Green Lake this area is a mecca for tech, gnar, rock slabs, rock rolls and drops. With many of the trails pushing expert and above its an area where expert riders can test their technical skills.

Blackcomb
An area with rogue trails built by keen enthusiasts Whistler has adopted many of the trails and maintains them as part of its network. Long, fall-line, rooty single tracks are a feature of Blackcomb. The higher you climb the more challenging the trails, offering some fantastic tech.

Cheakamus
South of the village adjacent to the stunning blue, glacier fed river and lake which gives this area its name. This area’s easy accessibility has terrain for all rider levels. Trails such as Farside and See Colours and Puke, offer fast flow, berms and easy jumps. You can then advance to AM/PM and Duncans Trail for more advanced rock rolls, punchy pinch climbs and bigger jumps.

Over the 40 years that I have been mountain biking I have seen the sport evolve from a left-field pastime where enthusiasts hurtled down fire breaks on basic bikes, to a sport where expensive highly specialised bikes are used on groomed, formed trails in dedicated bike parks!

The great thing about mountain biking is that it can be done anywhere, with just about any bike, all you need is a bunch of mates, good terrain and a place to drink beer and tell lies afterwards!

Modern bikes mean you can do more! Bigger jumps, faster down hills, easier climbs and ride longer with a higher level of safety. The E Bike has opened mountain biking up to more people and also means you ride harder for longer.

So if you love mountain biking and want to escape from cold muddy mountain bike destinations in the New Zealand winter, check out Whistler!

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KOREA DULLE TRAIL

A PATH OF REDISCOVERY

Words and Images by Tish Mete

Did you know the "K" in K-pop stands for Korea? Neither did I. Much like K-pop, South Korea itself holds an air of intrigue. It is not intentionally secretive; it's simply a region where tourism hasn't yet unveiled every corner. What South Korea lacks in familiarity, it makes up for in sheer uniqueness.

On paper, South Korea and New Zealand share many similarities; comparable temperature ranges, high quality of life, and a harmony of religious diversity. But where Korea stands apart is in its rich and ancient history, dating back over 300,000 years. This cultural depth, initially shaped by Chinese influence, has blossomed into a distinctly Korean identity.

South Korea can be divided into four general regions: an eastern region of high mountain ranges and narrow coastal plains; a western region of broad coastal plains, river basins, and rolling hills; a southwestern region of mountains and valleys; and a southeastern region dominated by the broad basin of the Nakdonggang River.

We were invited as a guest of Korea Tourism Organization in Sydney to experience a section of the 4,500km Korea Dulle Trail. If you are looking for a blend of history, health, culture and food diversity, along with a touch of innovation, then the Dulle Trail in South Korea is the place to go.

The Ministry of Culture, Sport, and Tourism, along with other Ministries, developed the trail. It is important to note that the collaboration of the trail's development was not just with the tourist in mind. The vision was to create "a path of rediscovery" where locals could use the trail in their daily lives, to walk at their leisure, to escape the hustle and bustle of their city lives and to visit different regions, while tourist could incorporate a small or a large section in their travel itinerary.

The Dulle Trail is a 4,500km walking trail that circumnavigates South Korea, connecting the outer edges of Korea. There are four sections, and 284 numbered courses make up the Korea Dulle Trail. Each of the four sections offers a blend of ocean, city, history, and culture; the Haeparang Trail in the east, the Namparang Trail in the South, the Seohaerang Trail in the West and DMZ Peace Trail in the North.

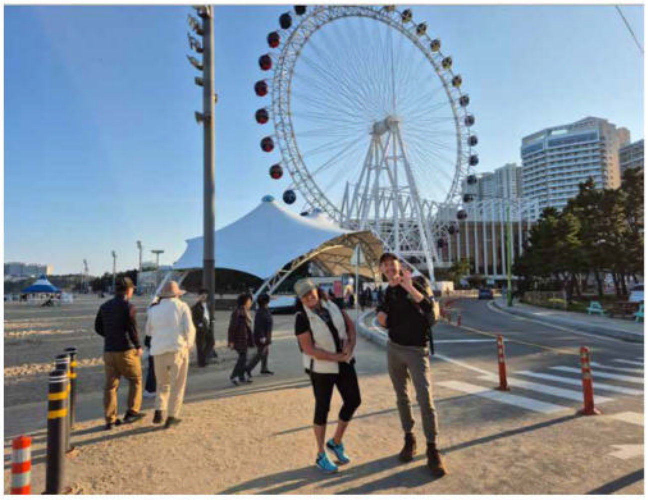
The idea is to walk as much or as little of the trial and in any order. It's not necessarily about walking the whole 4,500km in one hit, it's more about choosing the path that best suits. For some this may just be a stroll over the weekend with family and for others it a pilgrim from one place to the next.

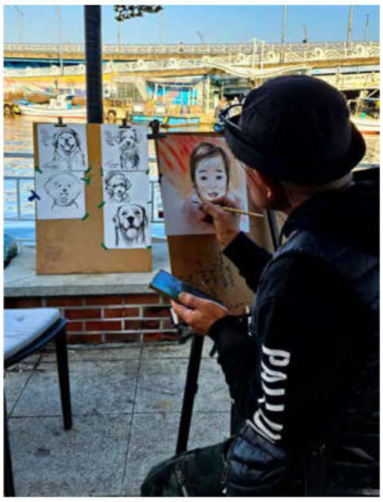
Our invitation was a week long experience and with over 4500kms to cover we were obviously not going to take it all in so our itinerary offered a cross section of what is available and with limited time, we were visiting a few places on the east coast, which offered a really diverse insight into what South Korea had to offer.

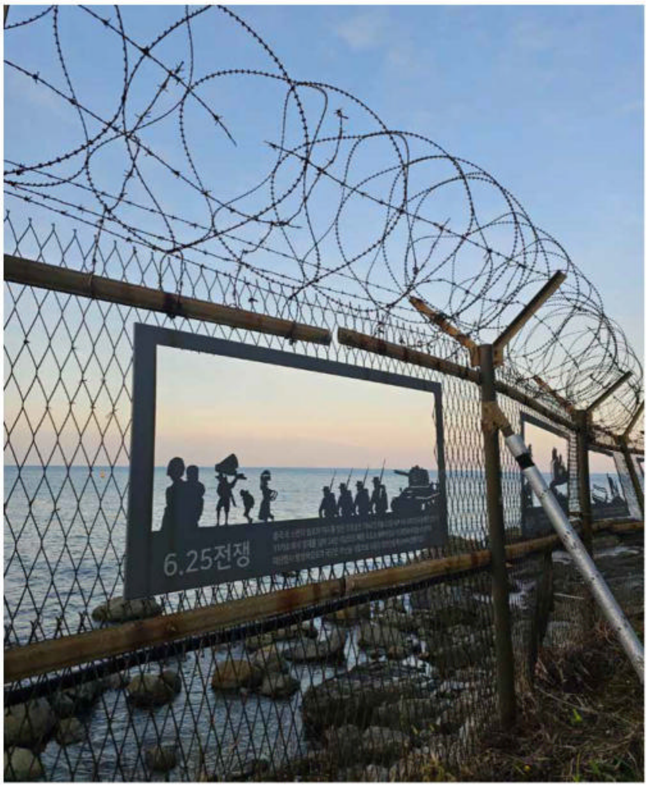
> *"The Dulle Trail is a 4,500km walking trail that circumnavigates South Korea, connecting the outer edges of Korea. "*

Images on the right are from day one of our trip: Scooter riding along Yeongrangho Lake, Course 45 of the Haeparang Trail including; Abai Village, Sokcho and the art displays depicting the Korean War that are imbeded in the fenceline of Course 45 of the Haeparang Trail.

바다향기로
SOKCHO



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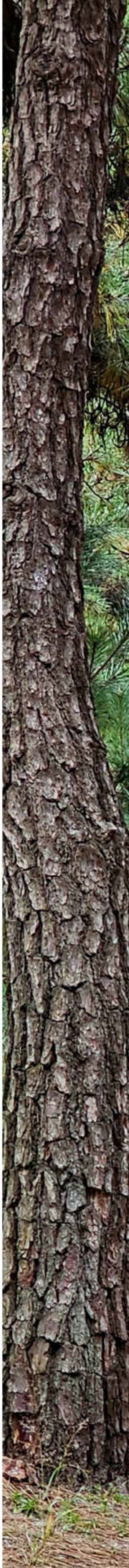
SOKCHO



Day two: Coffee Street, Follow the trail!, Bronze statues, Gyeongpoho Lake, local wildlife / Right: The pine forest

> *"The trail then follows the pine forest alongside Anmokhaebyeon Beach scattered with bronze statues and local wildlife (squirrels)."*

Our experience explored the HAEPARANG TRAIL on East Coast. This is known as the ‘path of contemplation,’ with a total of 50 courses cover 750 km from sunrise park in Busan to the Unification Observatory in Goseong, Gangwon-do. It follows the stunning coastal path along the east coast, featuring the blue sea (Parang).

Despite it being late in October the air was still warm, and we were fortunate that autumn bought with it pathways laden with golden leaves. We started our exploration along Yeongrangho Lake loop on e-scooters!

Our first taste of the Haeparang Trail began with course 45, a 17.6km trail. We started at what felt like the edge of Sokcho, a major port city with a population of just over 80,000 people. In the distance we could see the high-rise buildings of a modern city, but our trail took us on interesting path. At one point we boarded the Abai Gaetbae, a non-motorised ferry (where you can help the boatman pull the cables to get across to the other side) that took us across to the quaint Abai Village. We crossed bridges, walked across golden sands and along boardwalks, all the while bypassing the city lights.

A day later we found ourselves back on the trail; Course 39, near Gangneung. The 15.8km trail began crossing Solbaram Bridge to the area fondly known as “coffee street”. Jam packed with themed coffee shops, which stocked everything from pastries, deli treats, boutique roasters and signature coffees, it was a fantastic way to start any walk.

The trail then follows the pine forest alongside Anmokhaebyeon Beach scattered with bronze statues, local wildlife (squirrels) and exercise stations before coming to the picturesque Gyeongpoho Lake where you will find the Gyeongpodae Pavillion, which contains 16th century works by Yulgok and 11th century poems.

Our day ended in ClubD Oasis Spa Wellness centre, the first and only urban wellness hot spring in Busan, and the 8th national wellness hot spring in Korea. Each floor at ClubD Oasis is dedicated to a specific theme. The fourth floor, for example, houses its indoor and outdoor waterpark, the fifth-floor features Cheongsudang, an outdoor bath facility that resembles those found in Japan with saunas and hot stones occupying the entire sixth floor. Dressed in matching outfits (they call it a uniform) it was a terrific way to end the day.

THE OTHER KOREAN DULLE TRAILS

Other trails include:
NAMPARANG TRAIL – South Coast
Namparang-gil means "a path to walk along the blue sea of the south." 1470 km of trails consisting of 90 courses that follow the southern coast from Oryukdo sunrise park in Busan to Ttangkkeut village in Haenam. Beautiful ocean views, big cities and the quant charm of farming and fishing villages.

SEOHAERANG TRAIL – West Coast
1800km with 109 courses that connects Ttangkkeut (Lands’ End) Tower in Haenam to Ganghwa in Incheon. It means the trail where the people walk with (rang) the west sea (pado for waves) on the trail you will encounter the vast wide tidal flats that have been designated a UNESCO site along with sunsets, history, religion, and cultural exchanges.

DMZ PEACE TRAIL
The DMZ Peace trail boasts the cleanest environment on the Korean peninsula. It’s a reflection trail for peace and unification. 510 km with 35 courses. Pass through front-line villages, battlefields, plains, rivers, and mountainous terrain. The Peace Trail is divided into a main route which can be visited freely and a theme route for which you must make a reservation.

Be sure to download the **Durunubi App,** which allows you to follow your trail and collect stamps upon completion. The courses are clearly numbered, and you scan in and out, and get updated information on everything from the route to accommodation, food, and points of interest.

Day Three, above and right: Eclectic food, beautiful beaches, ocean views, city skyline, culture and plenty of steps.

> *"Our final day saw us up early to visit the Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, a Buddhist temple in Gijang-gun, Busan, South Korea. First built in 1376, this picturesque temple is perched on the edge of the ocean."*

KOREAN CUISINE

No story on South Korea would be complete without mentioning food.

South Korean food is a vibrant tapestry of bold flavours, communal dining, and age-old traditions that make every meal an adventure. From sizzling hot pots to delicate pickled side dishes, Korean cuisine strikes a balance between the robust and the refined.

Barbecue is popular with succulent cuts of beef and pork sizzling on a tabletop grill, wrapped in crisp lettuce with garlic, ssamjang (spicy bean paste), and a dash of rice—a bite-sized explosion of taste and texture.

Then there's bibimbap, a colourful mix of rice, vegetables, meat, and a perfectly fried egg, all drizzled with spicy gochujang.

Korean food also excels in comfort dishes like soft tofu stews and piping-hot bowls of ramen, delivering warmth with every spoonful. And the snacks? From spicy tteokbokki (rice cakes) to crispy fried chicken slathered in sweet chili sauce, street food culture is a feast of its own. A feature on South Korean food is the number of small bowls of condiments for personal choice.

Ultimately, Korean cuisine is more than just a meal—it's an experience. It's fiery, it's soulful, and it's a celebration of life, one delicious bite at a time.

Our final day saw us up early to visit the Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, a Buddhist temple in Gijang-gun, Busan, South Korea. First built in 1376, this picturesque temple is perched on the edge of the ocean. As well as a tourist hot spot, it's also a gathering place for Buddhist worship and tradition.

We next caught the Haeundae Sky Capsule is a 2.3km elevated railway that meanders along the coastal route from Cheongsapo to Mipo before heading to Course one of the Haeparang Trail.

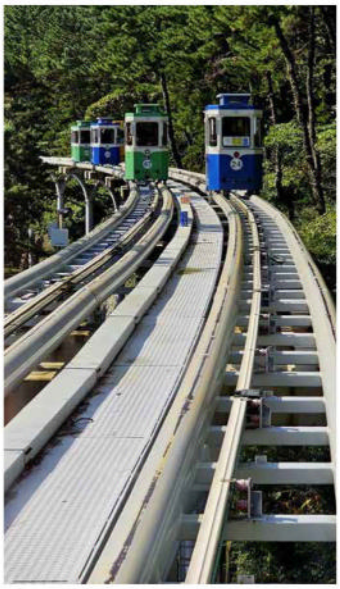
The 16.9km trail provided the most challenging walking, and the most natural scenery. The trail followed the undulating coastline across boardwalks, up and down stairs and through natural undergrowth. For me personally it was the most enjoyable day. In places the boardwalk clung to the cliff face and the city was just a blurred vision in the distance.

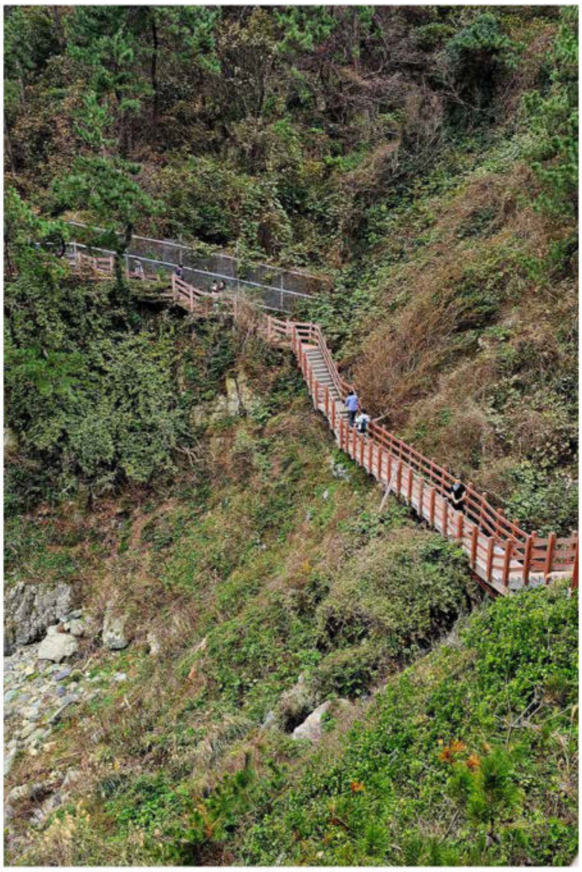
Our day ended with a walk along Haeundae Beach, one of South Korea's most popular beaches. The golden sands host a variety of local street performers, cafes, restaurants, and families just enjoying the evening before ascending Busan X The Sky, the second highest building in Korea at 411.6 meters. It provided us with a panoramic view of the landscape as well as a perspective of where we had come from that day.

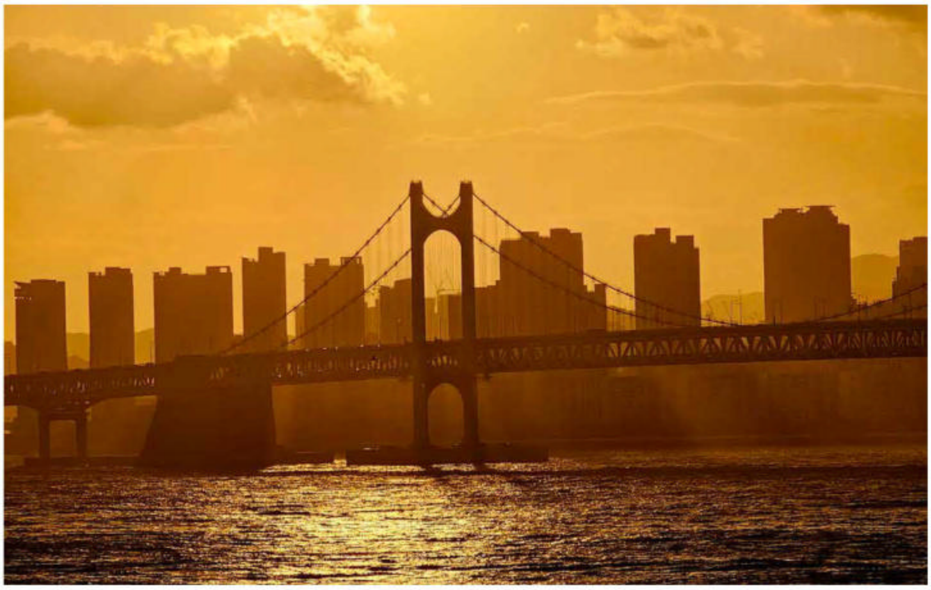
A week in South Korea is simply not enough. This whole area is unique, untouched, the Korean people welcoming, friendly and the region is a perfect combination of history, location, and community to make it a high priority to visit. For sure start with the Dulle Korean Trail but your 'path to rediscovery' will be learning that Korea is simply an amazing, varied destination awaiting to be discovered.

Thanks to the team at Korean Tourism Organization for a unique taste of South Korea. We will be back...
For more information visit:
english.visitkorea.or.kr

I wish for health for all people I love.
And I wish for healing, so I can find love and peace again.
I wish for lovely, loyal, sincere, genuine kind of love.
I wish to build a family full of love & laughter.



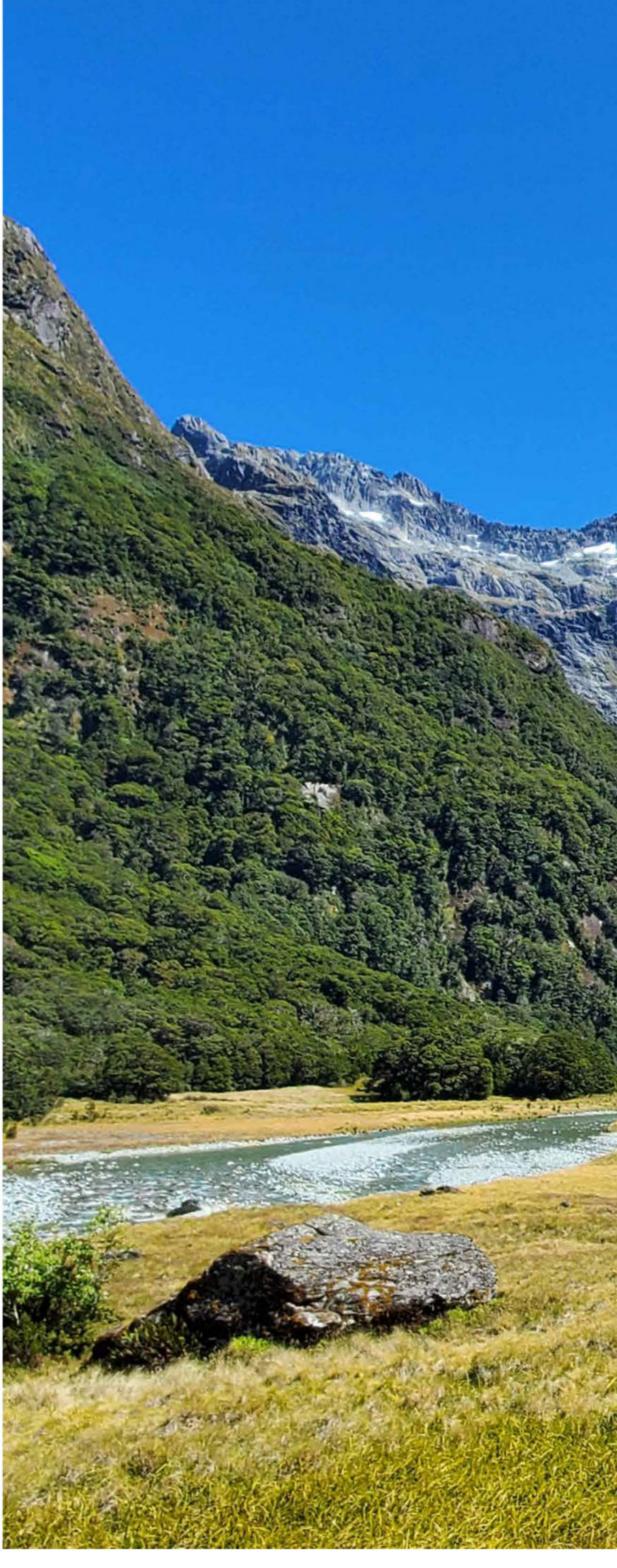




THE 5 PASSES ROUTE

AN EPIC ULTRALIGHT ADVENTURE

Words and Images by Cody Howell,
Kiwi Ultralight | KiwiUltralight.co.nz



New Zealand has no shortage of spectacular tracks; but if you want real adventure, you're best served by going off-trail.

The 5 Passes Route in Mount Aspiring National Park is one of New Zealand's more demanding yet rewarding off-trail adventures. The roughly 56-kilometer loop, typically completed in 5-6 days, presents a great reward for seasoned trampers, requiring robust navigation skills and off-trail pathfinding through bush and unmarked climbs.

For my wife and I, this adventure marked the last notable trip before founding Kiwi Ultralight. We tackled the 5 Passes with a kit filled almost entirely with homemade ultralight gear. Our streamlined setup meant a lighter load on sharp ascents and quicker maneuvers when bushwhacking through thick underbrush. Pushing the gear to its limits while navigating rugged, off-trail terrain was the capstone to our 20/21 Summer filled with tramping and gear testing on New Zealand's best tracks.

The route itself leads over five passes offering steep, strenuous climbs and stunning alpine vistas within the Southern Alps. For many, 5 Passes is a five-day endeavor; but fast-packers and ultralighters are raising the bar. This past year, the first FKTs (Fastest Known Times) were officially set in under a day, and we did it ourselves in 3 nights with all our gear in 35L packs we made ourselves.

Starting at the Routeburn Track Carpark and following Sugarloaf Track toward Sugarloaf Pass gives you an easy warm up with well-marked trail. Don't get used to it! Unlike the popular Great Walks, there are few well-worn paths here. Instead, it's just you, your map, and the terrain—providing a sense of raw adventure that is increasingly hard to find.

"For many, 5 Passes is a five-day endeavor; but fast-packers and ultralighters are raising the bar. This past year, the first FKTs (Fastest Known Times) were officially set in under a day, and we did it ourselves in 3 nights with all our gear in 35L packs we made ourselves."

Theater Flat, just down the valley from Sugarloaf pass, provides the first real sense of how big this area is.

Rock feature up to Fiery Col

Theater Flat, just down the valley from Sugarloaf pass, provides the first real sense of how big this area is. The large open flats surrounded by snowcapped mountains may just make you want to build a cabin and never leave.

We spent our first night in a small stand of trees in Theatre Flat, cozy in our down quilts and prototype trekking pole tent. It would have been great to take in the views by staying in the open, but the bitter cold rolls into the valley in the evening with only a few trees and large rocks to be your shield.

We decided to stop here for the night only because I had fallen climbing over some downed trees, my shoulder was aching and we wanted an exit strategy if I woke up the next day unable to use trekking poles.

The early stop and shoulder rest turned out to be wise. Not only did my shoulder recover almost completely, but our original plan to camp on Park Pass would have resulted in a cold, wind battered sleep if that morning tea break was any sign of the night prior.

The descent from Park Pass brought us through densely packed bush, each new section a maze of route-finding and bush bashing. It was here that I had my first run in with New Zealand's native nettle Ongaonga. I later read that people had died from the stings, and if you haven't had the pleasure of it's fiery pain, I suggest you keep your eyes peeled for the distinct green spikes that make North American nettle look like a joke.

We set up camp on day 2 at Cow Saddle and readied ourselves for the steepest part of the adventure. The next day took us up to Fiery Col, and it felt like the defining challenge of the trip. We had met another couple at camp the prior evening, the last we'd see before splitting up at Fiery Col.

They took the long way around, while we chose to climb straight up the granite slab. The challenge here being to find the way across an ascending chasm between us and Fiery Col – a rock scramble mixed with a bit of climbing.

"*If there's a single stretch that makes this one of the most memorable hikes in the country, this vertigo inducing mountain goat session must be it.*"

With the ridges steep and rocky, ultralight gear made a major difference here - heavier packs would have made the climb brutal under a blazing sun. Once past this challenge, the final climb is an easy and unambiguous talus cramble to the top. The red rocks that give Fiery Col its name make for a picturesque lunch stop.

A quick sidle around the next mountain leads up to Fohn Saddle, an open plateau scattered with sparkling alpine tarns. This spot is a clear reminder of what the Southern Alps are all about—vast, isolated, and untouched.

From the tarns we were faced with an unassuming challenge – a 600 meter drop down to the river over a slope covered in snow grass. The combination of treacherous angles and slippery terrain made it a slow, tense journey down—one of the more stressful sections of trail for sure. When asked at the bottom what I thought of it, "That sucked" was all I could muster. Quite an opposite response compared to the elation of that morning's treacherous rock climb.

We made our way along the river and rock hopped the rest of the way to a nearby rock bivvy where we camped for the night. The next day, we planned to cover the remaining half of the trail in one push.

From this point, the route was a "Choose your own adventure" puzzle. Bush bashing, grassy flats, boulder hopping, and river crossings kept us on our toes, with barely any clear markers or tracks to guide us. Occasionally, we'd spot faint trails from bait lines, but mostly, it was our own navigation that led us through the maze of terrain. Again in this section, small packs with no dangling gear paid off as the bush grabbed at us and slippery rocks challenged our balance.

At the end of the valley we came to Lake Sylvan, and there at the lake's edge was the welcome sight of a gravel trail leading back to the Routeburn Track and the world of marked trail and signposts.

For anyone looking to test their skills, leave the ordinary tracks behind, and explore some of New Zealand's last wild terrain, 5 Passes is an unforgettable adventure. For us, it was the total immersion in New Zealand's wild landscapes, a challenge that gave us both perspective and pride that gear we had made ourselves had gotten us through in spectacular fashion.

Timberland Motion Access Waterproof Low: Your All-Terrain Ally

The shift toward low-profile tramping footwear isn't just hype—it's a game-changer. Timberland's Motion Access Low shoes are built for everything from concrete to rugged trails, proving that you don't need to sacrifice comfort or style for performance.

Tested Tough
We've tackled the Waikato Bike Trail, navigated city pavements, and scrambled Ruapehu's rocky slopes in these shoes. The result? They handled it all with ease. Lightweight yet durable, safe and comfortable.

Trail-Ready Features
Equipped with TimberDry™ waterproof tech, these shoes keep your feet dry when the weather turns. The TimberGrip™ outsole, with its dynamic lug design, offers superb traction on everything from slick rocks to muddy paths. Meanwhile, the TimberCush™ comfort system and EVA midsole deliver a cushioned, responsive feel. Even after long treks, your feet feel supported, not sore.

Sustainability Meets Style
The Motion Access Low features ReBOTL™ fabric, made from at least 50% recycled plastic, and Premium Timberland® Leather. It's a win for both durability and eco-conscious. With sleek urban aesthetics and Timberland's iconic Tree logo, these shoes blend trail functionality with street style.

The Timberland Motion Access Low Shoe, as with all Timberland products, excels in comfort, performance, sustainability and attention to detail. Perfect for those who live for both urban exploration and off-the-grid escapes. These shoes prove you really can have a foot in both camps.

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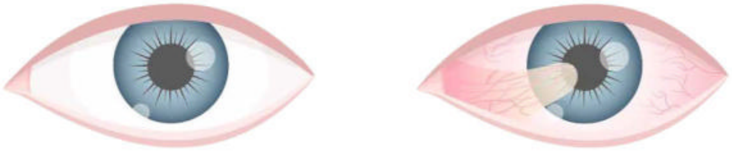


SURFERS EYE

UNDERSTANDING PTERYGIUM

Words by Dr Penny McAllum FRANZCO
Ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) - Specialist in pterygium, cataract and corneal transplant surgery

Have you ever wondered about that lump on your eye? Chances are it’s a pterygium (pronounced ter-IG-ee-um). This fleshy growth typically starts on the white part of the eye and gradually grows onto the cornea—the clear front surface—toward the pupil. Often appearing red and triangular, a pterygium usually develops on the inner corner of the eye, but can also occur on the outer corner or both. In some cases, one person may have multiple pterygia.

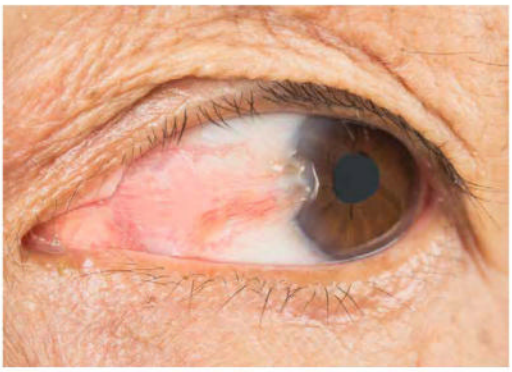
Is it Serious?
Pterygium is quite common and often asymptomatic, presenting mainly as a cosmetic concern. However, it can cause irritation when the eye becomes dry or inflamed, leading to soreness, stinging, or a sensation of having an eyelash stuck in the eye. This irritation may fluctuate. If a pterygium encroaches on the pupil, it can blur vision due to corneal distortion (astigmatism), dryness, or even scarring.

Who Gets a Pterygium?
Pterygium is primarily caused by sun damage from ultraviolet (UV) light, with dust and wind potentially exacerbating the issue. It’s especially prevalent in tropical regions, though New Zealand and Australia have some of the highest rates worldwide, due to our intense sunlight and outdoor lifestyles. Commonly known as "surfer's eye," it affects not only surfers but also sailors, skiers, gardeners, and many outdoor enthusiasts. Certain professions, like farming and construction, also show higher incidences.

What About Pinguecula?
Pterygium's cousin, pinguecula (pronounced ping-GWECK-yuh-luh), involves a similar process, but remains confined to the white part of the eye. Since it doesn’t extend onto the cornea, it usually causes fewer problems. However, a pinguecula can develop into a pterygium, particularly with prolonged sun exposure, albeit slowly over many years.

Prevention is Better Than Cure
Many of us spent our youth in the sun, so significant damage may have occurred early on, but it’s never too late to start protecting your eyes. Wearing sunglasses with 100% UV protection is the most effective way to prevent worsening of a pterygium. Polarized lenses can enhance vision in bright, reflective conditions, but don’t offer additional UV protection. While water sports can make wearing sunglasses challenging, options specifically designed for surfing are worth considering. A wide-brimmed hat also provides valuable shade. It’s hoped that the next generation will be more aware of the importance of eye protection, though convincing my own children has been a challenge.

"Commonly known as "surfer's eye," it affects not only surfers but also sailors, skiers, gardeners, and many outdoor enthusiasts. Certain professions, like farming and construction, also show higher incidences."



Common growth known as surfers eye

Time in the sun is a well known causal factor

> *"If you're experiencing persistent symptoms or are considering removal, you'll need to see an ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) specialising in pterygium."*

Do Eye Drops Help?
While eye drops won't eliminate a pterygium, they can alleviate irritation. Lubricating eye drops (artificial tears) are safe and often sufficient for soothing discomfort. Preservative-free options are best and can be used frequently if required. It's advisable to avoid "red eye" drops containing decongestants like naphazoline, as they may lead to rebound redness and increased irritation.

In some cases, a short course of anti-inflammatory eye drops (either steroidal or non-steroidal) may be necessary to manage inflammation. If irritation persists or worsens, or if the pterygium enlarges, surgical treatment may be worth exploring.

When to Seek an Eye Check-Up
If red, sore eyes become a frequent issue, it's wise to consult an eye care professional. Changes in vision or noticeable growth of the pterygium warrant prompt attention. An optometrist can evaluate your eye health, monitor a small pterygium, prescribe necessary glasses, and recommend treatments like lubricating drops. If you're experiencing persistent symptoms or are considering removal, you'll need to see an ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) specialising in pterygium.

Can a Pterygium Be Removed Safely?
Historically, pterygium surgery was notorious for high recurrence rates (up to 50%) and complications. However, advancements in surgical techniques over the last 20 years have greatly improved outcomes. The current gold standard involves removing the pterygium and applying a conjunctival autograft—a transplant from the healthy tissue under the upper eyelid— where the pterygium was located. This technique has significantly reduced recurrence rates, with some surgeons reporting rates as low as one in a thousand.

Additionally, the use of a special adhesive glue instead of sutures has made the surgery quicker and recovery more comfortable. Typically performed under local anaesthesia (sometimes with mild sedation), the procedure lasts less than half an hour and does not require a hospital stay. Post-surgery, the eye may be sore for a day or two, requiring pain relief and a dark environment. Redness can persist for up to a month, and steroid eye drops are usually used for about six weeks. Serious complications are rare, but your surgeon will discuss the risks and benefits to help you decide if surgery is right for you.

Take-Home Message
Protect your eyes with 100% UV-filtering sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat when outdoors. If a small pterygium causes occasional discomfort, over-the-counter, preservative-free lubricating drops can help. If irritation continues, the pterygium grows, or you notice changes in your vision, consult an optometrist or ophthalmologist for a thorough evaluation.

eye doctors

What is a Pterygium?

A pterygium is a thickened growth on the surface of the eye. It slowly grows over the clear front window of the eye.

How do you get a pterygium?

It is primarily caused by ultraviolet light and usually develops in people with a history of signification sun exposure, like surfers & skiers.

What are the symptoms?

- Triangular shaped growth
- Redness & irritation
- Dry, itchy & gritty
- Distorted vision

BOOK FOR AN ASSESSMENT

09 520 9689 I reception@eyedoctors.co.nz I eyedoctors.co.nz

Remuera I Botany Junction I Karaka I Warkworth

XMAS WISH LIST

OUTDOOR RESEARCH SWIFT AIR CAP RRP: $49.99

Perfect for fast and light adventures. Features a flexible brim for easy packing, a TransAction™ headband to keep moisture out of your eyes, a lightweight, breathable, moisture-wicking fabric and a mesh back for added ventilation. Rated UPF 40 and has an adjustable back for a custom fit. 48g

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

OUTDOOR RESEARCH SUN RUNNER CAP RRP: $59.99

Lightweight and breathable UPF40+ sun protection. Features large mesh panels and a convertible design (remove the sun cape or keep it attached to protect the back of your neck). TransAction™ headband and anti-glare dark fabric under the brim. 79g

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

CHICKFLY PANTS

Designed to empower women in the outdoors with greater bathroom access using Zipperless flys comprised of two stretchy overlapping panels that pull apart and snap back in place after being released.

WWW.CHICKFLY.COM

SPEED FUSION WEB SPORT WOMEN'S & MENS RRP: $189.99

Relentlessly adaptable. The Speed Fusion Web Sport includes a modern outsole, a fresh aesthetic, and simple straps for the perfect mix of modern, sporty sandals.

Features

- 100% recycled webbing upper
- Hook and loop closure system for quick adjustability
- 60% recycled elastic cord and lock lacing system for quick secure fit
- 100% recycled laces
- 60% recycled elastic heel pull tab webbing
- FloatMax™ Foam integrated insole for a soft and smooth underfoot experience
- Merrell sticky rubber outsole with durable traction that grips when and where you need it
- Vegan Friendly
- 0lbs-14.81oz

WWW.MERRELL.CO.NZ

RAB VEIL 12L LIGHTWEIGHT RUNNING VEST RRP: $369.95

Lightweight and ventilated, this running vest offers plenty of hydration options along with multiple handy pockets for challenging runs.

WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

KIWI ULTRALIGHT BUSH CLOTH RRP: $22.50

Reusable toilet paper for drying off after peeing in the backcountry. Soft suede front to pat dry, waterproof backing to keep your hands dry and clean. 10 patterns, comes with mini carabiner or retractable cable attachment options, only 15g total.

WWW.KIWIULTRALIGHT.CO.NZ

red
red
SPORT

YETI PANGA®28L WATERPROOF BACKPACK RRP: $450.00

Built for those who live their lives on the water. Keeps your gear dry, whether in a storm or on a lake.

WWW.NZ.YETI.COM

RED PADDLE CO 11 SPORT MSL INFLATABLE PADDLE BOARD PACKAGE RRP: $1,799.95

A high-spec inflatable board designed for speed and performance and is designed for paddlers looking to progress their paddling.

WWW.RED-EQUIPMENT.CO.NZ

red
red
RIDE

RED PADDLE CO 10.8 RIDE MSL INFLATABLE PADDLE BOARD RRP: $1,799.95

A versatile, all-round board with excellent durability, superior stability, and is designed to glide over the water in all conditions. Suitable for all types of paddlers.

WWW.RED-EQUIPMENT.CO.NZ

STOKEDNZ ADVENTURE TOWELIE (TOWEL PONCHO) RRP: $114.00

Portable change room + towel all in one! Get changed, dry, cozy, anytime, anywhere inside a towelie. Super absorbent, lightweight, quick-drying 100% Turkish Cotton.
Ethically made.

WWW.STOKEDNZ.CO.NZ

HYDRO NEXT GEN MOC SE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S RRP: $189.99

Meet the Hydro Next Gen. The Hydro style you've come to love plus the performance capabilities from the brand that makes the world's #1 hiking boot brings you the most capable Hydro Moc to date. Equipped with truly hands-free entry, max cushion FloatMax midsoles, and an improved heel shape combine for friction-free all-day comfort and style.

Features

- Bootie waterproof construction to keep feet dry
- Water-friendly EVA foam upper for a lightweight flexible fit and ease of cleaning
- BLOOM® performance foam is made of algae biomass, transforming green water into clean water in the process
- FloatMax™ Foam midsole for a soft and smooth underfoot experience
- Rubber outsole

WWW.MERRELL.CO.NZ

KIWI ULTRALIGHT TUI 42 RRP: $425.00

The NZ-made Tui 42 is among the lightest multiday packs in the world and is known for its many unique patterns. It's designed to carry an ultralight kit so you can stay light and quick in the backcountry. The Tui 42 is frameless with 7 external pockets, rolldown top, plus an adjustable & removable hip belt. Capacity 42L Weight 300-420g.

WWW.KIWIULTRALIGHT.CO.NZ

OUTDOOR RESEARCH ASPIRE / FORAY 3L JACKET RRP: $399.99

Made from recycled AscentShell™ Dry for durable, waterproof, breathable performance with stretch and a PFAS-free Nikwax Direct.DRY water repellent finish. Features include an adjustable hood, hem-to-bicep TorsoFlo™ zips for venting, drawcord hem and hook-and-loop cuff closures.

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

LIFESTRAW GO 2.0 WATER FILTER BOTTLE 22OZ RRP: $59.99

LifeStraw Go Series is the ultimate sidekick for safer, better-tasting water for travel and everyday use.

The advanced 2-stage filter improves taste and protects against bacteria, parasites, microplastics, chlorine, silt, sand, and cloudiness. The BPA-free bottle is made from 50% post-consumer recycled plastic.

- The carbon filter reduces chlorine, odors + organic chemical matter
- The membrane microfilter lasts up to 4,000) - about five years of daily use and the equivalent to 8,000 single use plastic water bottles.
- Carbon filter lasts up to 100 L - about two months.
- LifeStraw is proud to be a B Corp and Climate Neutral Certified brand
- For every purchase, a child in need receives safe drinking water for a year.

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

LIFESTRAW PEAK SERIES SOLO RRP: $59.99

Great for hiking, backpacking, camping, emergency situations, travel or on-the-go needs. LifeStraw Peak Series Solo Water Filter is an ultra-lightweight (48.2g), compact (just 12.9cm), portable water filtration device that removes bacteria, parasites, microplastics, silt, sand, and cloudiness from drinking water.

- Highly versatile: Standard 28mm PCO threads screw on to standard water bottles
- Fills 1L bottle in just 20 seconds
- 2,000L of clean drinking water
- Made with premium, durable 50% post-consumer recycled BPA free plastic.
- Includes leak-proof top and bottom caps.
- One-handed flip cap

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

LOWE ALPINE YACURI 48L TREKKING PACK RRP: $549.95

Featuring the adjustable V-TRAX™ carry system, this pack offers comfort over long distances while keeping the weight down.

WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

KIWI ULTRALIGHT SILK FITTED SHEETS RRP: $95.00

Never stick to a hut mat again! This ultralight fitted sheet fits almost all DOC Hut mattresses using sewn-in elastic. Made using 100% ripstop silk, it pairs with a quilt like silk liners pair with sleeping bags. The perfect luxury item for the Kiwi tramper. Includes attached stuff sack for quick storage. Weight 110g

WWW.KIWIULTRALIGHT.CO.NZ

WINTERSPORTS PROOF

20W FUEL SERIES 5 POWER BANK - 10.000MAH

***RRP: $79.95**

Compact 10,000mAh power bank with 20W fast-charging. Lightweight and portable, designed for quick recharges on the go. Ideal for keeping devices powered anywhere.

XTORM XTREME SOLARBOOSTER 21W + RUGGED POWER BANK 10.000

***RRP: $399.95**

Power up anywhere with the Xtorm Xtreme. 21W solar panel and 10,000mAh capacity. Durable, rugged, and perfect for your next adventure.

XTREME 20W FUEL SERIES 5 POWERBANK 10.000 MAH

***RRP: $79.95**

Compact 10.000mAh power bank with 20W fast-charging. Lightweight and portable, designed for quick recharges on the go. Ideal for keeping devices powered anywhere.

XTREME RUGGED POWER BANK 20.000MAH

***RRP: $199.95**

20,000mAh rugged power bank ideal for outdoor adventures. Durable, waterproof, shockproof design with multiple USB ports for versatile charging. Perfect for powering devices off the grid.

SOURCE WIDEPAC 2L

***RRP: $79.95**

2L hydration reservoir with a wide opening for easy filling and cleaning. Leakproof, BPA-free, and taste-free design. Ideal for hands-free hydration on adventures.

SOURCE SURVIVAL KIT

***RRP: $149.95**

Drink Safely Anywhere, Anytime. The AWA Straw offers best in class filtration and high flow rate making drink a breeze. Pair with the AWA Bottle to easily drink safely on the go.

SOURCE WIDEPAC ULTIMATE HYDRATION SYSTEM 3L

***RRP: $109.95**

3L hydration system with insulated reservoir and tube for all-weather use. Taste-free, leak proof design with a wide opening. Ideal for long, rugged outdoor adventures.

outdoor action

*prices are subject to change

Find the full product range online at www.outdooraction.co.nz
Follow us on Instagram and Facebook @outdooractionnz

LIFESTRAW PEAK SERIES GRAVITY FILTER SYSTEM 3L RRP: $149.99

It's the simple, lightweight and compactible option for back-country camping and backpacking. The optimized filtration cartridge boasts a high flow rate and ability to remove sand and silt without clogging. The water storage bag is made from premium materials for extra durability.

- Protects against bacteria, parasites, microplastics, silt, sand, and cloudiness
- Extreme durability
- Highly versatile: use as a gravity system, large squeeze bottle, as a straw, or use the filter with a water bottle
- Designed to be fully leak-proof to use as storage while moving about.
- Membrane microfilter lasts up to 2,000L

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

REAL MEALS

Premium freeze-dried meals, crafted by adventurers and prepared by chefs. Fuel your adventures from start to finish!

Bircher Muesli: RRP: $17.95
Deliciously creamy with whole oats, fruits, and honey—perfectly energising for your morning adventure!
Chocolate Cake Pudding: RRP: $17.95
Indulge in rich, velvety chocolate bliss that melts in your mouth—an irresistible dessert treat!

WWW.REALMEALS.CO.NZ

LIFESTRAW PEAK SERIES COLLAPSIBLE SQUEEZE BOTTLE RRP: $99.99

Backcountry versatility for trail running, through hiking and limited space adventures. LifeStraw's Peak compact squeeze filtration is an all-in-one water storage and filtration device. The filter membrane density has been optimized for flow rate and the over-cap features and smart seal mouthpiece prevent leakage.

- Made from premium materials
- Durable enough to last you on your long-haul adventures without having to worry about rips, tears, and punctures.
- Ultralight and collapsible at less than 4 ounces
- Use it as a straw filter, storage solution, squeeze system or connect to other Peak Series systems.

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

EXPED VERSA 2R (MEDIUM) RRP: $179.99

Versatile synthetic 60g/m2 microfibre insulation for use in fair to 3-season conditions. Features, an integrated pump, recycled 75D polyester fabric and 5cm-thick chambers with fatter chambers at the sides to reduce the chance of rolling off. Certified carbon neutral by myclimate™. 183cm x 52cm. R-Value 2.4 595g

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

KIWI ULTRALIGHT DOWN QUILTS RRP: FROM $490.00

The sleep system with the best warmth-to-weight ratio on the market. Kiwi Ultralight quilts are filled with 850+FP ethically-sourced goose down, and custom-made in New Zealand. There's a box-baffle design, removable footbox with zip closure, pad strap attachments, neck drawstring, customised length, and 20% overfill for longevity. Comes in three different comfort ratings Comfort ratings 5°C, 0°C, -5°C, or made-to-order Weight From 390g.

WWW.KIWIULTRALIGHT.CO.NZ

PACK&GO POUCH RRP: $59.98

Lightweight, durable hip pack that easily stows into its own pocket. Made of tough, recycled, lightweight nylon, this hip pack is perfect for travelling and hiking. A hands-free way to store your essentials — phone, wallet, keys, and more — you can focus on the task ahead, not where you put your keys. The manoeuvrable straps mean you can wear it on your hip, waist, as a crossbody, or slung over your shoulder. Just pick it up and go. Once you're finished, stow it into its handy pocket for safe keeping.

WWW.KATHMANDU.CO.NZ

FEATHER FLIGHT CARRY-ON RRP: $379.98

The combination of hardshell case and soft, ripstop nylon body, make the Feather Flight Carry-on super lightweight, easily manoeuvrable, and impact resistant. This bag is small and mighty. In fact, the lightest carry-on suitcases in its class, globally, at 1.6kg.

WWW.KATHMANDU.CO.NZ

Now you can fit in those extra undies.

Meet Feather Flight
Our lightest carry-on ever,
without sacrificing durability.

Certified B Corporation

ISPO AWARD 2024 WINNER

Kathmandu®

kathmandu.co.nz

BLACK DIAMOND STORM 500-R HEADLAMP RRP: $139.99

All-around performance and features in a small compact headlamp for a user with access to a power source and values the ability to go out with a fully charged battery.
- Rechargeable: Powered with integrated high capacity 2400 mAh Li-ion battery with micro-USB charge port
- 500 Lumen max output
- IP67: Waterproof
- PowerTap™ Technology for instant transitioning
- Brightness Memory allows you to turn the light on and off at a chosen setting
- Settings: strength in proximity and distance modes, dimming, strobe, red, green and blue night-vision, and lock mode

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

BLACK DIAMOND DISTANCE 1500 RRP: $379.99

Designed for fast-paced, overnight endurance pushes and moving through technical terrain at night, the Distance 1500 represents the pinnacle of headlamp technology.
- PowerTap™ Technology boosts beam to max setting 1500 lumens
- Constant output programming provides continuous light before dropping to reserve power mode
- One full battery lasts 8 hours at 300 lumens; two full batteries last 8 hours at 600 lumens
- Comfort Cradle™ provides contoured, bounce-free fit
- Multifaceted optical lens design provides a combination of depth lighting
- Rechargeable, interchangeable magnetic battery pack
- Helmet compatible
- Submersible IP67 waterproof rating
- Rear red flasher

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

BLACK DIAMOND SPOT 400 RRP: $99.99

For a technical user who expects all-around performance and features from their headlamp but still values a small size and compact package.
- Dual-Fuel: Maximum flexibility with the rechargeable Lithium Ion BD 1500 battery or Alkaline cells (included)
- 400 Lumen max output
- PowerTap™ Technology allows instant adjustment between max output and dimmed power
- Integrated battery meter display shows % of power remaining
- Settings include proximity and distance modes, dimming, strobe, red LED night-vision and lock mode
- Brightness Memory allows you to turn the light on and off at a chosen brightness
- Red night vision has dimming and strobe modes and activates without cycling through the white mode
- Multifaceted optical efficiency lens technology
- IPX8: Waterproof-Tested to operate at least 1.1 meters underwater for 30 minutes.
- Digital lock mode feature safeguards against accidental use when stored in a pack or pocket

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

THAT'S IT RUNNERS BUNDLE RRP: $52.65

Introducing the That's It Runners Bundle, all you need to help keep you happy on your feet for any distance. Using our High Grade NZ Mānuka Oil, these guys will protect you from chafing niggles, nasty blisters and sun/wind burn lips. Get it all on and go hard. Exclusively available online with free shipping in NZ.
Shop online at **WWW.THATSIT.NZ**

KEA KIT | OUTDOOR SURVIVAL SYSTEM

The First Aid & Survival System built for every adventure. Modular Organisation & Tough Materials mean you will always be ready to respond. Available in 2 sizes, you can choose to build your kit with our range of gear or just pack your own.
WWW.KEAOUTDOORS.COM

KEA AWA | WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM

Drink Safely Anywhere, Anytime. The AWA Straw offers best in class filtration and high flow rate making drink a breeze. Pair with the AWA Bottle to easily drink safely on the go.
WWW.KEAOUTDOORS.COM

BEAR COTTAGE POSSUM THROW RRP: FROM $1125.00

This luxury possum fur throws range in size from 1.3m x 0.9m in size to 2.5m x 2.0m and backed in black velvet . They come in natural brown and grey
WWW.BEARCOTTAGE.CO.NZ

THIS IS OUR OUTDOORS.

Where our iconic tree stands as a tall testament to our commitment to the space.

In the heartbeat of nature, find the rhythm of your adventure. Create your own world of vast terrain, untouched trails, and the freedom to define what the outdoors can mean to you.

www.timberland.co.nz

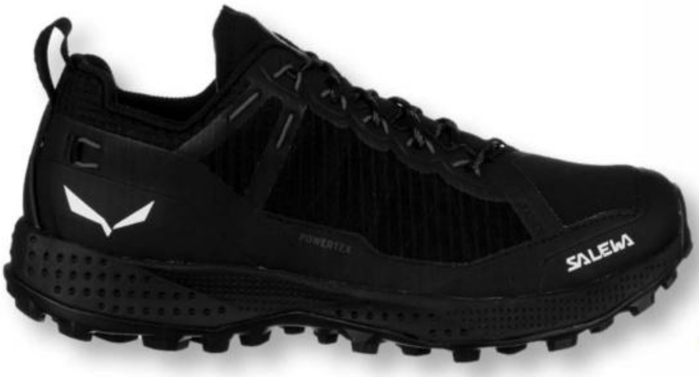
TIMBERLAND MOTION SCRAMBLE WATERPROOF LOW (MEN'S) RRP: $360.00
Waterproof hiking shoe made with Cordura fabric and TimberDry ™ waterproof membrane.
WWW.TIMBERLAND.CO.NZ

TIMBERLAND MOTION ACCESS LOW (MEN'S)
RRP: $250.00
Lightweight hiking shoe made with TimberCush ™comfort system and lug outsole.
WWW.TIMBERLAND.CO.NZ

SALEWA PEDROC PRO MID POWERTEX RRP: $459.90
The Pedroc Pro Mid PTX is a lightweight technical shoe, with a mid-cut upper. The SALEWA® 3F system and Ankle Protector system provide additional support and stability, while an abrasion-resistant double ripstop upper with TPU rand provide enhanced protection. Weather protection and breathability are provided by our Powertex® PFC-free waterproof membrane. The EVA midsole delivers optimal rebound, and the Pomoca™ Speed Hiker Pro outsole has a multi-directional lug pattern that works well on mud, grass and rock.
Fit: STANDARD / Weight: (M) 390 g (pictured) (W) 290 g
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA

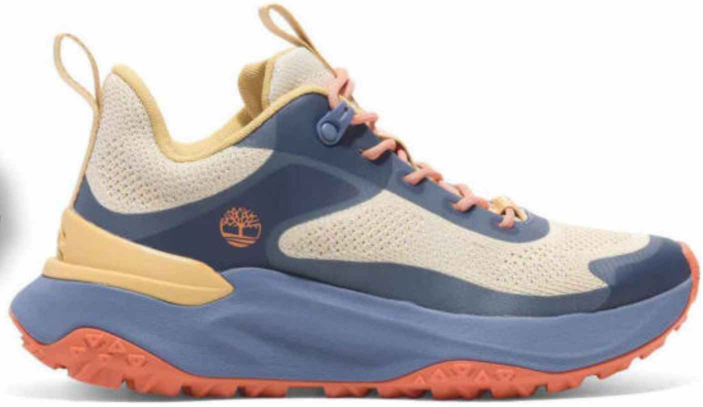
SALEWA MOUNTAIN TRAINER MID GORE-TEX® RRP: $549.90
Our MTN Trainer Mid GTX is a lightweight alpine trekking boot with a suede leather upper and a breathable GORE-TEX® Performance Comfort lining. At the ankle, the Flex Collar allows natural movement and the 3F System provides flexibility, support and a blister-free fit. Underfoot we feature a dual-density Bilight TPU midsole and a Vibram® WTC outsole.
Fit: WIDE / Weight: (M) 700 g (W) 570 g (pictured)
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA

SALEWA ALP TRAINER 2 MID GTX RRP: $479.90
The Alp Trainer 2 Mid GTX has a suede leather and stretch fabric upper with a protective rubber rand. Featuring a GORE-TEX® Extended Comfort lining for optimal waterproofing and breathability, while the customizable Multi Fit Footbed (MFF) with interchangeable layers allows you to adapt it to the unique shape of your foot. Climbing Lacing right to the toe allows for a more precise fit, and the Vibram® Hike Approach outsole performs across a wide range of mixed mountain terrain.
Fit: STANDARD / Weight (M) 552 g (pictured) (W) 482 g
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA



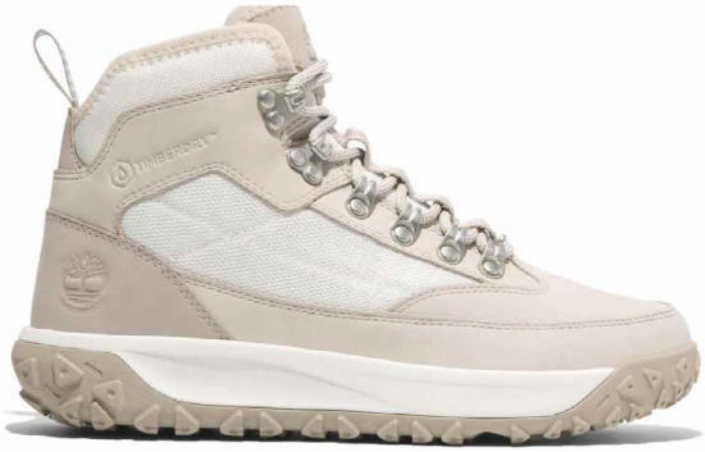
SALEWA PEDROC POWERTEX RRP: $399.90

Designed as a lightweight, versatile, yet protective technical shoe with a PFC free Powertex® membrane for waterproof protection, and good breathability. The strong ripstop mesh upper and TPU rand offer high abrasion resistance. The EVA midsole delivers optimal rebound, and the Pomoca™ Speed Hiker Pro outsole works well on a wide spectrum of mixed surfaces.
Fit: STANDARD / Weight: (M) 345 g (W) 260 g (pictured)
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA



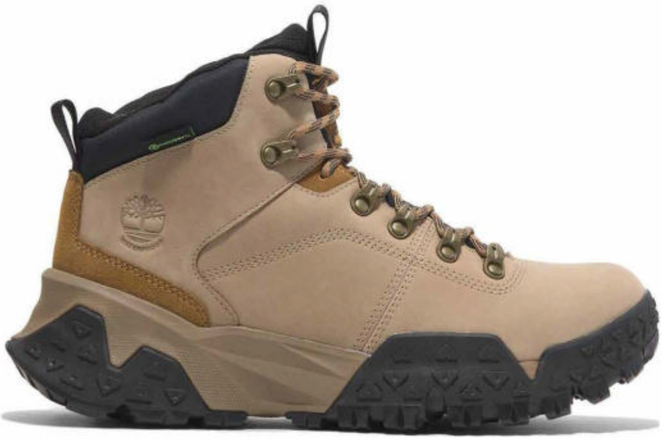
TIMBERLAND MOTION ACCESS LOW (WOMEN'S) RRP: $250.00

Lightweight hiking shoe made with TimberCush ™comfort system and lug outsole.
WWW.TIMBERLAND.CO.NZ



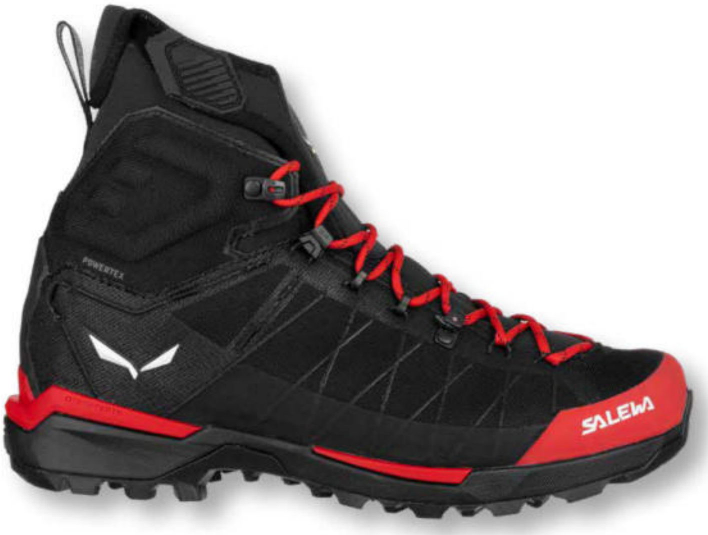
TIMBERLAND GREENSTRIDE MOTION 6 MID (WOMEN'S) RRP: $400.00

Lightweight and waterproof hiking shoe with sturdy rubber outsole for traction.
WWW.TIMBERLAND.CO.NZ



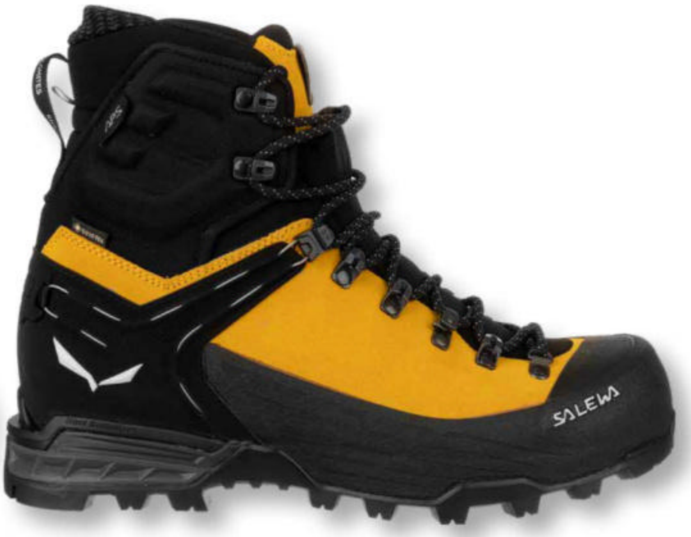
TIMBERLAND MOTION SCRAMBLE WATERPROOF MID (MEN'S) RRP: $400.00

Waterproof hiking boot made with Cordura fabric and TimberDry ™ waterproof membrane.
WWW.TIMBERLAND.CO.NZ



SALEWA ORTLES LIGHT MID PTX RRP: $659.90

This lightweight, comfortable mid-cut boot is both technical and agile. The tough nylon fabric upper is reinforced with abrasion-resistant, protective TPU stitching and film. It features our PFC-free waterproof and breathable Powertex® membrane, and the elastic gaiter keeps out trail debris and grit. The Edging Plate blends targeted stiffness for edging stability and enhanced climbing performance, with balanced flex and rebound for hiking comfort. The Pomoca Alpine Light outsole ensures increased grip and traction across varied alpine terrain.
Fit: STANDARD / Weight (M) 575 g (W) 425 g (pictured)
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA



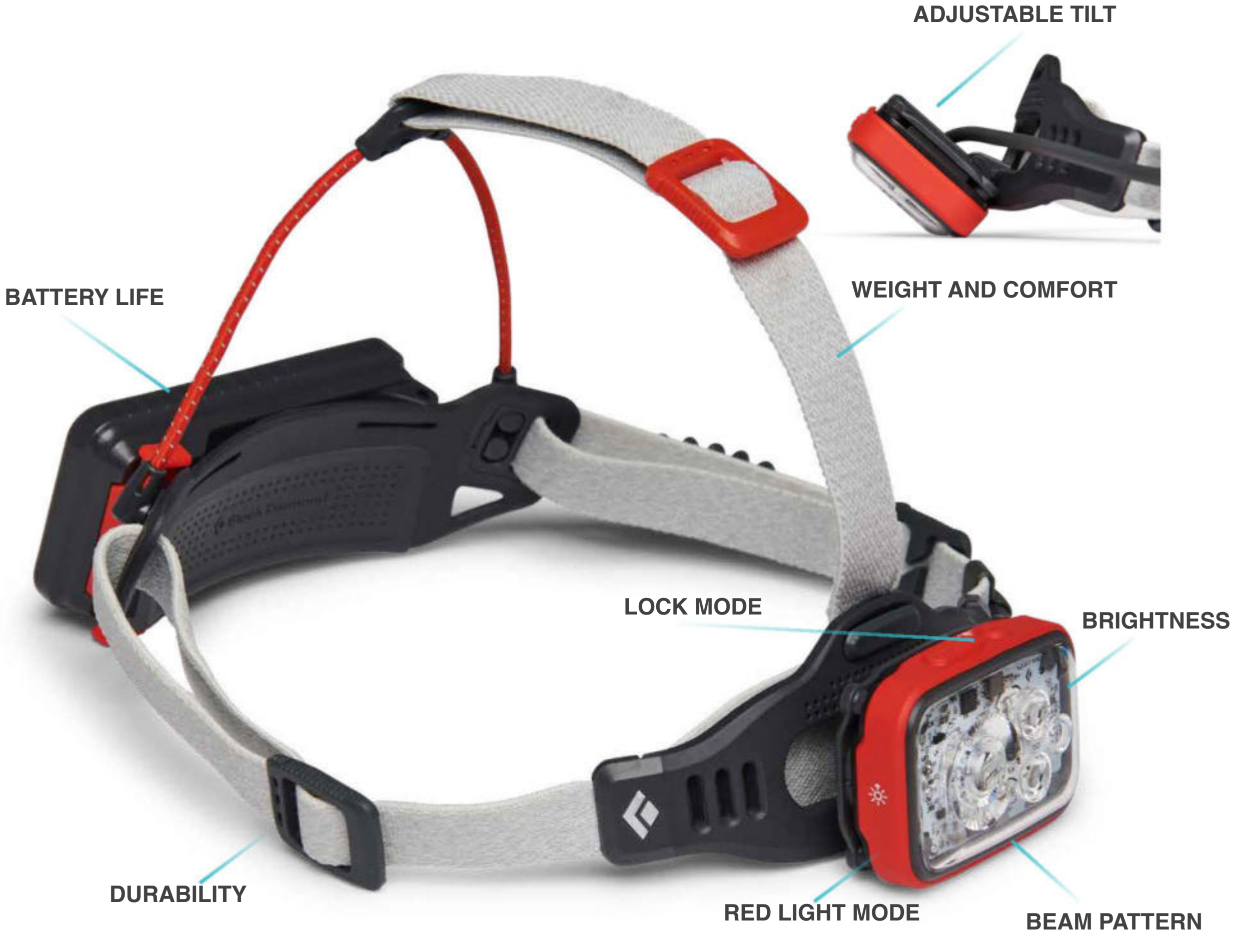
SALEWA ORTLES ASCENT MID GORE-TEX® RRP: $799.90

Featuring a thick suede leather upper, SALEWA® 3F system with steel cables and a reinforced TPU rand make this all-mountain boot exceptionally robust and durable. The carbon-loaded nylon fibreglass insole increases stability, and the dual density expanded polyurethane midsole with dedicated stiff and cushioned zones ensures comfort and precision. The waterproof, breathable GORE-TEX® Performance Comfort membrane has an integrated insulation layer. The Flex Collar improves rear ankle flexion, and the semi-auto crampon compatible Vibram® Alpine Guide sole unit is engineered for reliability on difficult terrain.
Fit: STANDARD / Weight (M) 850 g (pictured) (W) 660 g
WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ/SALEWA

LET THERE BE LIGHT

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE

A reliable head torch is essential when it comes to any adventure, whether you're night tramping, setting up camp in the dark, or navigating tricky terrains. Here’s what you should look for when picking the most appropriate one for your next escapade:



BLACK DIAMOND DISTANCE 1500 HEADLAMP
Available from **www.southernapproach.co.nz**

PRO TIP: *A head torch with around 150-300 lumens is great for most outdoor activities.*

BRIGHTNESS (MEASURED IN LUMENS)

The brighter, the better—but only to a point. Lumens measure how much light a head torch emits. While ultra-bright beams (500+ lumens) are perfect for night hiking or trail running, you don't need this much for close-up tasks like cooking at camp or reading in your tent. Look for adjustable brightness settings to tailor your light for various activities.

PRO TIP: *IPX4 is usually enough for most adventures, but if you’re headed somewhere wet, aim higher.*

WATERPROOF RATING (IPX RATING)

Your head torch should withstand the elements, especially if you’re exploring unpredictable environments. An IPX4 rating means it can handle splashes and rain, while IPX7 or IPX8 ratings are for full submersion (ideal for canyoning or kayaking).

IPX4 is an IP code, or Ingress Protection Marking. This is a classification standard which rates the degree of protection against intrusion.
The IP code is an IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) standard, which is why you can also see IP codes on products like smartphones, cameras etc. The standard gives the consumer a way to see through vague marketing terms and understand the given product’s degree of protection.

- *An IP code consists of the IP identification and two digits that describes the level of protection.*
- *The first two letters “IP” indicates that it is an IP code*
- *The first digit represents the level of protection against solid particles such as dust*
- *The second digit describes the level of protection against liquids such as water*

WEIGHT & COMFORT

A head torch that's too heavy or has poor ergonomics can be a real pain—literally. Lightweight models (below 100 grams) with an adjustable headband are ideal for comfort. You'll want something that sits snug but doesn't pinch or slide around while you move.

PRO TIP: *Look for a head torch with a separate battery pack at the back for better weight distribution, especially for high-lumen models.*

LOCK MODE

Ever pull your head torch out of your pack, only to find it's switched on and drained the battery? A lock mode prevents this by ensuring the torch only turns on when you need it.

PRO TIP: *Head torches with lock modes or hard-to-accidentally-hit buttons are perfect for longer trips.*

BEAM DISTANCE AND PATTERN

Beam distance refers to how far the light will reach. A good head torch will offer both floodlight (wide) and spotlight (focused) settings. Floodlight is useful for tasks around the campsite, while a spotlight is crucial for spotting distant trail markers or hazards.

PRO TIP: *A head torch with a beam distance of around 50-80 meters is usually sufficient for most adventure activities.*

DURABILITY

Outdoor adventures can be rough, and you need gear that's up to the challenge. Check that your head torch has shockproof or impact-resistant ratings, especially if you're prone to dropping things or exploring rugged terrain.

PRO TIP: *Rubberized casing or shock-resistant frames will give your head torch more resilience during those inevitable knocks.*

RED LIGHT MODE

If you're planning early morning starts or nights under the stars, a red light mode is key. It preserves your night vision, so you won't blind your fellow adventurers or lose your ability to see in the dark after turning the light off.

PRO TIP: *Red light mode is also great for wildlife observation, as it doesn't startle animals.*

ADJUSTABLE TILT

An adjustable tilt is a game changer when you need to focus light on specific tasks without craning your neck. It's especially useful for reading maps or setting up camp after dark.

PRO TIP: *Look for a head torch with multiple tilt angles to suit different scenarios.*

BATTERY LIFE & TYPES

Longevity matters—especially when you're far from a power source. Check how long the head torch will run on its highest and lowest settings. Many head torches offer rechargeable batteries (like lithium-ion) or take standard AA or AAA batteries. Each has its advantages—rechargeables are eco-friendly but may not last as long, while standard batteries can be easily swapped out in the field.

PRO TIP: *Carrying spare batteries is a must on multi-day adventures or solar chargers!*

PRICE VS. PERFORMANCE

There's a vast range of head torches on the market, from budget-friendly options to high-end models. While it's tempting to go for the cheapest option, investing in a quality head torch with good battery life, weather resistance, and brightness will save you headaches down the road.

PRO TIP: *You will remember quality long after the cost.*

MEET THE
DISTANCE 1500

The latest in headlamp innovation is here. Designed for fast-paced, overnight endurance pushes and moving through technical terrain at night, the Distance 1500 represents the pinnacle of headlamp technology.

- PowerTap™ Technology boosts beam to max setting 1500 lumens
- Constant output programming provides continuous light before dropping to reserve power mode
- Multifaceted optical lens design

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HEAD TORCHES FOR HIKING IN NEW ZEALAND

Adventure Star Rating:

Any sort of rating is just an opinion - these are Adventure Magazine's estimations and are open to interpretation.

The categories
- **(BB) Brightness and Beam Distance:** Helping adventurers choose the right lumens for their activities.
- **(BL) Battery Life:** Highlighting the importance of longevity in the outdoors, with tips on rechargeable vs. standard batteries.
- **(DW) Durability and Waterproofing:** Ensuring their torch can handle rugged environments and unpredictable weather.
- **(RL) Red Light Mode:** Preserving night vision and enhancing wildlife observation.
- **(CW) Comfort and Weight:** Emphasizing lightweight models for those long hikes and multi-day adventures.

Your head torch is more than just a flashlight strapped to your head—it's an essential survival tool when you're out adventuring. Whether you're exploring caves, hiking in the dark, or just need a reliable camp light, pick a model that balances brightness, battery life, comfort, and durability.

SILVA TERRA SCOUT XT

Eco-friendly and efficient, this torch delivers 350 lumens with hybrid power options. The hemp headband offers comfort and sustainability.

Star Rating:
- Brightness: ★★★★☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★☆☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.outdooraction.co.nz

BLACK DIAMOND SPOT 400

A top performer with 400 lumens, offering excellent beam distance and adjustable brightness. Its IPX8 Waterproof-Tested to operate at least 1.1 meters underwater for 30 minutes and the lightweight design makes it comfortable for long hikes. Red light mode is a standout for preserving night vision.

Star Rating:
- Brightness: ★★★★☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★★
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★★
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.southernapproach.co.nz

LEDLENSER MH11

This high-tech torch offers 1,000 lumens (boost mode) with app-controlled light modes. With 100 hours of battery life, it's a beacon of reliability. IP54-rated, it handles light rain but isn't fully waterproof. Has both green and red light mode.

Star Rating:
- Brightness: ★★★★★
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★☆☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.equipoutdoors.co.nz

PETZL ACTIK CORE

With 600 lumens, this torch is powerful yet efficient. The hybrid power source—rechargeable Core battery or AAA—boosts its versatility. It handles rugged conditions well, but its IPX4 rating limits it to splash resistance.

Star Rating:
- Brightness: ★★★★★
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★☆☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.equipoutdoors.co.nz

PETZL NAO RL

Delivering an impressive 1,500 lumens with reactive lighting, the Nao RL adjusts brightness to surroundings for optimal battery use. Lightweight yet powerful, it excels in challenging environments.

Star Rating:
- Brightness: ★★★★★
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★☆☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.bivouac.co.nz

BIOLITE HEADLAMP 330
A compact, ergonomic torch offering 330 lumens. The no-bounce design is perfect for dynamic activities, though its battery life on max brightness is limited to 3.5 hours.
Star Rating:

- Brightness: ★★★☆☆
- Battery Life: ★★★☆☆
- Durability: ★★★☆☆
- Red Light: ★★★★☆
- Comfort: ★★★★★

www.livingsimply.co.nz

BLACK DIAMOND STORM 500-R
With a rugged design and 500 lumens, the Storm 500-R is perfect for harsh weather. It's IP67 waterproof and rechargeable, ideal for multi-day trips.
Star Rating:

- Brightness: ★★★★☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★★
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.southernapproach.co.nz

PETZL IKO CORE
Innovative and ultralight, the Iko Core produces 500 lumens and features an ergonomic design for superior comfort. It's water-resistant but not fully waterproof.
Star Rating:

- Brightness: ★★★★☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★☆☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★☆☆
- Comfort: ★★★★★

www.bivouac.co.nz

KNOG BILBY 400
Full silicon headlamp with 400 lumens. Dust and waterproof (IP67) and has a two-button operation: one cycles through five light modes.
There's set-and-forget strap adjustment and built-in USB recharging.

- Brightness: ★★★☆☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★☆
- Comfort: ★★★★★

SILVA EXPLORE 4
Compact and versatile with 400 lumens, Silva Explore 4 thrives in extreme conditions. IPX7 waterproofing and lightweight design make it ideal for wet environments.
Star Rating:

- Brightness: ★★★★☆
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★☆
- Red Light Mode: ★★★☆☆
- Comfort: ★★★★☆

www.outdooraction.co.nz

BLACK DIAMOND DISTANCE 1500 HEADLAMP
Brightness boost up to 1500 lumens, with comfort cradle plus IP67 to stand harsh weather conditions. Designed for fast-paced, overnight endurance pushes and moving through technical terrain at night, the Distance 1500 represents the pinnacle of headlamp technology.

- Brightness: ★★★★★
- Battery Life: ★★★★☆
- Durability: ★★★★★
- Red Light Mode: ★★★★★
- Comfort: ★★★★★

www.southernapproach.co.nz

Each of these head torches brings something unique, ensuring every adventurer finds their perfect fit for New Zealand's rugged trails. For a more detailed review of some of these head torches go to **www.adventuremagazine.co.nz** key word: **headtorch**

FEED YOUR ADDICTION

Like a ‘perfect storm’, we have seen a dramatic growth and development in online stores over the past 5 years.

We are dedicating these pages to our client’s online stores; some you will be able to buy from, some you will be able drool over. Buy, compare, research and prepare, these online stores are a great way to feed your adventure addiction.

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Day one the Huahine pass

Hawaiki Nui 2024 More than just a race

Words and images by Steve Dickinson and Greg Knell

Visiting Tahiti begins the moment you step into the Air Tahiti Nui companionway. As you walk up the gangway to the welcoming doors of your Air Tahiti Nui Dreamliner, a faint scent of frangipani fills the air, and the soft sound of ukulele music and melodic voices surround you, setting the tone for the journey ahead. I'm certain, Air Tahiti Nui is the only airline that places a flower in your hair as you board—a small, memorable touch that lets you know your voyage has begun.

Once airborne, the chilly Auckland winter fades away as the warmth of the tropics beckons. The onboard crew, dressed in formal uniforms at the start of the flight, soon transitioned into vibrant, traditional attire, a perfect reflection of the island's spirit. It's a seamless transition into a tropical paradise, even before you land.

The Hawaiki Nui Va'a, is the world's most prestigious outrigger canoe race, is a major sporting event in the Tahitian sporting calendar. Held annually, the race traverses the Society Archipelago's stunning and challenging waters, offering a unique combination of stunning location, physical endurance, technique, and island culture.

The History of the Hawaiki Nui Va'a

The Hawaiki Nui Va'a has its roots deeply embedded in the traditions of Polynesian canoe culture. Outrigger canoes (known as va'a) have been central to the lifestyle of Pacific Islanders for centuries, used for transportation, fishing, and navigating between the islands. The Hawaiki Nui Va'a race was established in 1992 to celebrate this deep-rooted heritage, bringing together paddlers worldwide to honour the skills, endurance, and camaraderie that define the sport.

The event was created not only to showcase the traditional sport of outrigger canoeing but also to emphasize the cultural significance of the canoe to the people of French Polynesia and the wider Pacific. The name "Hawaiki Nui" refers to the mythical homeland of the Polynesians, often associated with the Marquesas Islands, and symbolizes the spiritual and historical connection of the islands.

Over the years, the race has grown in size and prestige, attracting elite teams from all over the Pacific and from countries further afield, including New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and Japan.

The Location: Tahiti and the Society Islands

The Hawaiki Nui Va'a takes across the Leeward Islands of Tahiti, the largest island in the Society Islands group of French Polynesia, which lies in the central South Pacific Ocean. The locations lush landscape, turquoise lagoons, and mountainous interior make it one of the most picturesque regions in the world, and the waters surrounding it provide a challenging and rewarding environment for competitive canoeing.

The race itself consists of three stages that span a total distance of approximately 128 kilometres (about 80 miles) and takes paddlers across a variety of ocean conditions. Each leg of the race offers a unique test of endurance and skill, with teams navigating the open ocean, strong currents, and shifting winds. The Hawaiki Nui is the ultimate test of paddling ability, where teamswork to navigate challenging conditions while conserving energy for the duration of the race. The race is in 3 parts: Huahine to Raiatea, a sprint section in the Raiatea Lagoon to Tahaa, then a final section TaHaa to Bora Bora

L-R: Flowers for the winners / Captain Arii foiling / Ladies of Bora Bora lagoon / Tahitian cheerleaders / Time to cool off / Biggest smile at the huahine market / Final hand shake

TALES FROM THE SEA: EXPLORING TAHITI BY YACHT
Ask anyone about Tahiti and her islands, and they'll likely paint a picture of a water-bound paradise. Life there unfolds around the sea and its serene lagoons. It's no surprise, then, that the best way to truly experience Tahiti and her islands is by water—whether it's a swift day excursion, a solitary paddle, or the grandeur of a yacht voyage. Sailing these waters offers a sensory feast. Each hour of the day brings new marvels, every moment another "wow" to savor.

For our third year running, we had the privilege of exploring this nautical haven with Tahiti Yacht Charters, the premier charter company in the region. Their fleet caters to every kind of adventurer, but this time, we were lucky enough to step aboard Argo—a floating embodiment of luxury.

Setting Sail: The Argo Experience
With Argo, the journey became more than a voyage; it was an immersion into the rhythm of Tahitian life. Captained yachts offer not just peace of mind but a gateway to the hidden wonders of the islands. Arii, our captain, had an almost legendary local knowledge of the region. He led us to private beaches where time seemed to pause, to secret spots for feeding sharks and manta rays, and even to a small, unassuming bakery with the best bread in the archipelago.

The crew of three—Arii, alongside Christiane and Raina—were more than guides; they were curators of an experience that blended effortless hospitality with gourmet excellence. One moment they'd be preparing a feast worthy of a five-star restaurant, the next they'd regale us with tales of the islands' history and folklore.

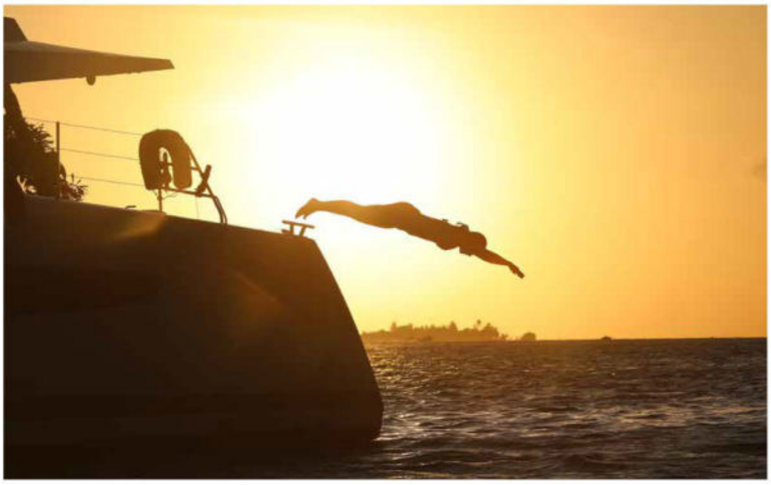
Yacht Life: Where Comfort Meets Adventure
Luxury aboard Argo wasn't just about plush interiors and spacious decks, though those were certainly highlights. It was the balance of high-end amenities with a sense of adventure. Every yacht in the Tahiti Yacht Charter fleet is thoughtfully designed for comfort in the tropics, equipped with open cockpits and breezy layouts that make you feel at one with the sea.

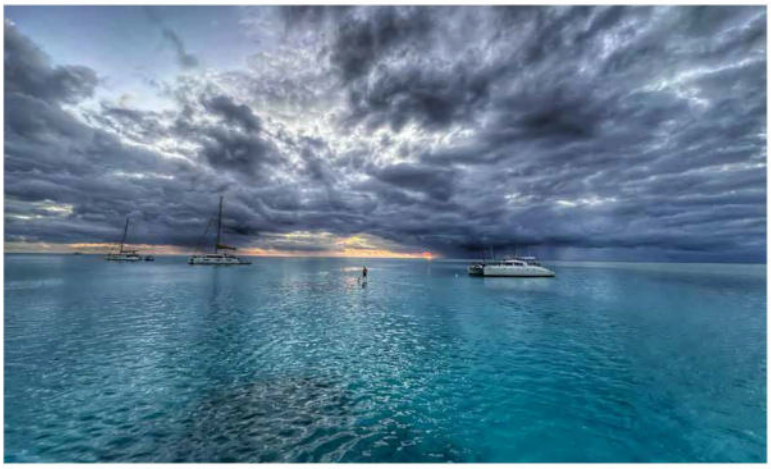
Whether enjoying a morning espresso while the sun painted the sky or sipping wine as it dipped beneath the horizon, life aboard Argo was a symphony of indulgence.

Why Tahiti by Yacht?
There's something magical about exploring Tahiti from the deck of a yacht. The shifting colours of the sea, the secluded beaches, and the rhythm of life aboard create an experience unlike any other. Whether you're seeking the solitude of a quiet cove, the thrill of swimming with marine giants, or simply the pleasure of a perfectly crafted sunset dinner, Tahiti Yacht Charters delivers.

For anyone yearning to discover the soul of these islands, a yacht is more than a vessel, it's a gateway to the extraordinary.
www.tahitiyachtcharter.com

TAHITI YACHT CHARTER





Above: Bora Bora lagoon finals day

Far left: Our beautiful boat from Tahiti Yacht Charters

Left top to bottom: The long paddle to Bora Bora

Miti sunset dive off Argo

Greg paddleboarding into the sunset

Start line Huahine

Huahine: The Island of Women
Often described as one of French Polynesia's most tranquil and least major touristy islands, Huahine is a hidden gem, perfect for travellers seeking authenticity and serenity. Just a short flight from Tahiti, Huahine comprises two islands, Huahine Nui (Big Huahine) and Huahine Iti (Little Huahine), connected by a small bridge. The island is famed for its lush, jungle-covered mountains, pristine beaches, and crystal-clear lagoons.

Huahine offers a wealth of cultural experiences, including visits to ancient marae (temples), where visitors can learn about the island’s traditional history. The island is also renowned for its vanilla plantations and the famous “sacred eels” of Faie Bay. The calm lagoon is perfect for kayaking, snorkelling, and paddleboarding, while the island’s quiet villages offer a taste of local life with traditional Polynesian crafts and cuisine.

Raiatea: The Sacred Island
Often overshadowed by Bora Bora, Raiatea is a culturally rich and historically significant island. Known as the "sacred island," it is home to the Taputapuātea Marae, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This ancient Polynesian religious and political centre was once a hub for navigating the Pacific and is central to the history of the Polynesian people.

Raiatea also boasts lush rainforests, waterfalls, and peaceful lagoons, making it perfect for eco-tourism and adventure travel. Visitors can explore the island’s interior on a hike or discover the underwater world while diving in its vibrant coral reefs. Raiatea is a less commercialised destination compared to Bora Bora, offering a more tranquil and intimate experience for those seeking a deeper connection to Polynesian culture.

Together, these islands offer a diverse range of experiences, from relaxation on pristine beaches to cultural exploration and adventure activities. Whether you’re looking for luxury or authenticity, Huahine, Tahaa, Bora Bora, and Raiatea provide an unforgettable destination.

Tahaa: The Vanilla Island
Located just north of Raiatea, Tahaa is often called the "Vanilla Island" because of its world-renowned vanilla production. Visitors can tour vanilla farms to see how the beans are cultivated and processed. The island is also famous for its stunning coral gardens, perfect for snorkelling, and its motus (small islets), which offer pristine beaches and crystal-clear waters ideal for swimming and relaxing.

Tahaa remains relatively untouched by mass tourism, making it a perfect destination for those looking to experience authentic Polynesian life. The island’s luxurious resorts often feature overwater bungalows, offering visitors spectacular views of the lagoon and nearby islands.

AIR TAHITI NUI
243
Sprite
VINI

Crossing the finish line in Bora Bora

Bora Bora: The Pearl of the Pacific

No trip to French Polynesia would be complete without visiting Bora Bora, often hailed as the most beautiful island in the world. Known for its turquoise lagoon surrounded by a ring of coral reefs, Bora Bora's dramatic backdrop of Mount Otemanu offers breathtaking views. The island is world-famous for its overwater bungalows, which allow visitors to sleep above the crystal-clear waters teeming with vibrant marine life.

Bora Bora is a playground for anything to do with water, with options for snorkelling, scuba diving, jet-skiing, and paddleboarding to list a few. Visitors can explore the island's lagoon by boat, hike the lush trails, or simply relax on the idyllic beaches.

The race

In the 2024 Hawaiki Nui, the 31st edition of this prestigious event, the number of Va'a teams was noticeably smaller. Nevertheless, the competition was fierce, with three teams in contention for the title heading into the final day of races.

After two stages, Team OPT held a slim 8-second lead over Shell Va'a. Shell Va'a, which had sparked some doubts after a third-place finish the previous day, silenced its critics with a strong performance in the second stage. Air Tahiti Nui, last year's runner-up, was still in the hunt, trailing Team OPT by 97 seconds and with a chance to make a late push for the win.

As the race began on the final day, a leading pack soon formed, featuring Team Huahine, Shell Va'a, and Air Tahiti. After an hour of intense lagoon racing, Team OPT remained in the top ten, maintaining proximity to the leaders as they exited the lagoon.
The final forty minutes of the race delivered a thrilling spectacle. Team OPT and Air Tahiti engaged in a fierce head-to-head battle, providing fans with a gripping display of long-distance racing. In the end, Air Tahiti edged out Team OPT by just a few seconds to win the stage, but its consistent performance over the previous days was enough to secure their second consecutive championship title. Shell Va'a, finishing fourth behind Team Huahine, could not hold off Air Tahiti, with only 5 seconds separating the two teams for second place overall.

The race was exciting and thrilling. The top teams were just seconds apart even after so many kilometres of paddling. But thrilling as the race had been, the location, people, and culture overshadowed such a great event. The combination of location and action is impossible to beat and cliqued as it is – 'everyone was a winner'.

Thanks to: Captain Arii and his team Christiane, Raina, plus Maire and Miti www.tahitiyachtcharter.com
www.nz.airtahitinui.com | www.tahititourisme.nz

A little "arc-en-ciel" (rainbow) of promise in the Bora Bora lagoon

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Vanuatu, named one of the top 10 countries to visit

Vanuatu has been named one of the top destinations in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2025, landing at #8 on their must-visit list. This recognition celebrates the country's blend of natural beauty, rich cultural history, and untouched island experiences—making it a top choice for travellers with a sense of adventure in 2025.

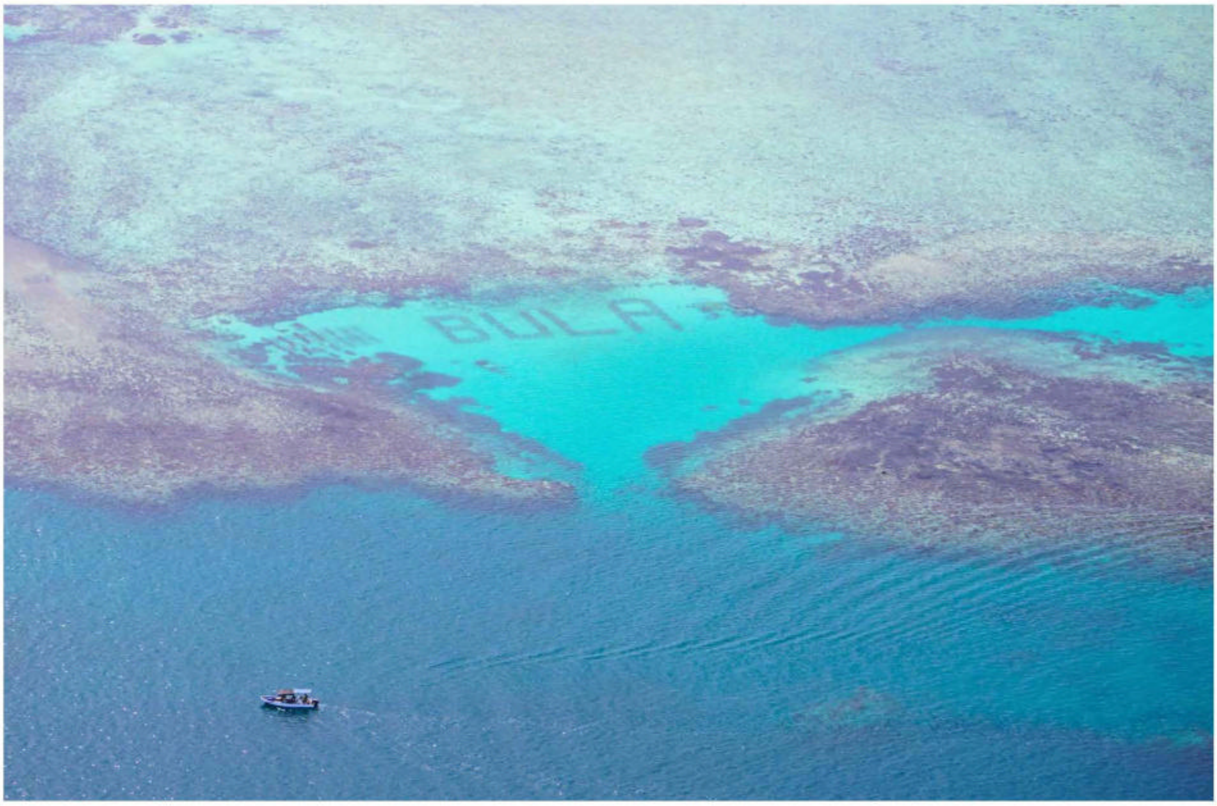
Lonely Planet's selection process is rigorous, considering factors like unique experiences, the 'wow' factor, and a country's dedication to sustainability, diversity, and its communities. Vanuatu ticks all the boxes, standing tall among a world of travel options.
Vanuatu Tourism Office CEO, Adela Issachar Aru, calls this a tremendous honour. "This recognition puts Vanuatu on the world stage, opening our islands to new eyes," she said. "We're proud of our commitment to sustainability and to preserving our traditions and welcoming culture. We invite the world to experience the magic of Vanuatu and discover why it's a standout among dream destinations."

Vanuatu's recognition highlights the islands' dedication to sustainable tourism, ensuring that its cultural and natural treasures remain unspoiled for future generations. Each of Vanuatu's islands offers something unique:

Efate, home to the capital, Port Vila, gives easy access to barefoot luxury resorts and rich cultural experiences. Espiritu Santo is a diver's paradise, boasting world-class sites like the SS President Coolidge wreck and the dazzling Champagne Beach.
For those seeking a volcanic thrill, Tanna offers access to Mt. Yasur, the most accessible active volcano on the planet, while Pentecost Island gives travellers a rare glimpse of its famous land-diving rituals, the precursor to modern bungee jumping.

Direct flights to Port Vila are available three times a week from Auckland via Solomon Airlines, with additional routes offered by Fiji Airways from other major New Zealand cities, plus there is a flight from Auckland to Santo each week.
Whether you're looking for a quick tropical escape or an island-hopping adventure, Vanuatu's proximity makes it a prime spot for New Zealanders looking for relaxation, adventure, and cultural immersion.

Plan your journey to this unforgettable destination at **www.vanuatu.travel/nz.**



Fiji - just add water

Dive into Fiji's Conservation Legacy at BULA Reef

Looking to combine your next tropical getaway with a dose of purpose? BULA Reef at Plantation Island Resort in Fiji offers not just crystal-clear waters and vibrant marine life, but a front-row seat to one of the most groundbreaking coral restoration projects in the world.

Situated off the Malolo District coast, BULA Reef is now the world's largest coral rescue effort. Over a thousand heat-adapted "super corals" were transplanted here, pulled from extreme heat stress areas. These were regions where marine heatwaves threatened to wipe out coral populations. While most corals left in those hot zones perished, BULA Reef is thriving, showcasing the resilience of these specially selected corals.

This project is part of the C4C's UN-endorsed Reefs of Hope initiative, the first-ever coral-focused climate adaptation effort to receive UN recognition. And for good reason. Instead of conventional coral gardening, which can be resource-heavy, the team behind BULA Reef employs an innovative approach—allowing fish to do the heavy lifting in maintaining coral nurseries and restoration sites. Think of it as nature lending a hand to heal itself, saving both time and money while promoting long-term coral health.

BULA Reef is not just scientifically impressive; it's visually awe-inspiring, too. Imagine snorkelling or diving around a 16-metre tall, 45-metre-wide structure, spelling out "BULA" in giant metal-framed coral formations. For perspective, each letter is taller than the famed Hollywood sign's letters—Fiji style. It's an epic underwater monument to conservation.

This is more than just an eco-initiative; it's a glimpse of how travel and sustainability intertwine seamlessly. With UNESCO backing the project as part of its Ocean Decade of Action, BULA Reef is a living testament to the future of coral reef restoration, drawing in adventurers and conservationists alike.

To preserve the corals and avoid damage, Plantation Island Resort do not encourage visitors to BULA Reef.

Follow this link on how you can get involved: **www.plantationisland.com/activity/coral-conservation/**

Dive Into Fiji's Underwater Paradise: The Soft Coral Capital of the World
Beneath those clear turquoise waters lies a whole other world—the kind that's made Fiji the soft coral capital of the world. With vibrant reefs, epic marine life, and dive sites that belong on every adventurer's bucket list, Fiji offers an unparalleled diving experience.

Start with the legends of Fijian diving: **The Great Astrolabe Reef** and The **Great White Wall**. Located off Kadavu Island, the Great Astrolabe Reef is one of the largest barrier reefs on the planet. This underwater wonderland is a diver's dream, with a mix of colourful corals, manta rays, and an array of fish that will have you wide-eyed from the moment you plunge in. On Taveuni Island, the Great White Wall offers something equally stunning—an otherworldly dive site where soft corals in shades of white seem to glow against the deep blue backdrop. It's an ethereal dive experience that feels like exploring another planet.

Whether you're an experienced diver or just looking to dip your toes into the underwater realm. From soft coral forests that sway in the current to thrilling shark encounters, Fiji's underwater world is an adventure waiting to be explored.

Catch the Bula Stoke: Surfing Adventures in Fiji Fiji isn't just about palm trees and pristine beaches; it's home to some of the world's most epic waves, and a perfect destination for surfers who crave the thrill of the ocean. If you're chasing the ultimate surf adventure, Fiji is the spot where world-class breaks meet laid-back island vibes.

At the heart of Fiji's surf culture is Fiji Surf - Share the Bula Stoke the local legends who have been fostering the stoke for years. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a first-timer looking to catch your first wave, these guys know how to get you onto the best breaks. And when we say the best, we mean world famous names like Frigates, Namotu Lefts, Wilks Passage and of course Cloudbreak—a wave that's gained serious fame in the surfing world in 2024.

This year's World Surf League (WSL) competition brought the world's top surfers to Fiji, The Corona Fiji Pro was such a success that it has been re booked for 2025.

But the beauty of surfing Fiji goes beyond the comps. If you're new to the surf scene, don't worry—Fiji has you covered. The Fiji Surf Resorts and Hotels I Six Senses Experiences experience is designed to cater to beginners who want to try out surfing for the first time. With expert instructors and the perfect balance of laid-back learning and adrenaline-pumping waves, this is a place where you can fall in love with the sport while soaking in the breathtaking Fijian scenery.

Whether you're chasing barrels or dipping your toes into the surf world, Fiji offers more than just waves—it's an all-in-one adventure that will have you sharing the "Bula Stoke" with fellow surfers worldwide.

Set Sail in Fiji: Sabre Sailing Adventure for the Whole Family

Looking for a day of adventure that's perfect for the whole family, yet offers a laid-back vibe? South Sea Sailing's 'Sabre' delivers just that, blending island culture with oceanic fun, all aboard a sleek 78-foot catamaran. It's the kind of escape that gives you a taste of Fijian life, while letting you soak up the sun and the sea.

What sets South Sea Sailing's 'Sabre' apart from the usual day-trip fare is the balance of adventure and relaxation. Sure, you're exploring the depths of the ocean, but you're also kicking back in style—lounging on deck, enjoying the stunning views, and indulging in local flavours. It's adventure, Fijian-style, without the rush.

This is the kind of day trip that weaves culture and nature together seamlessly. Whether you're sailing with your kids, a group of friends, or just your significant other, it's an unforgettable way to experience Fiji's waters. Plus, for those who might not be thrill-seekers, there's no pressure—just pure, laid-back island living at its best.

When you're ready to get out on the water and experience a side of Fiji that's as adventurous as it is relaxing, South Sea Sailing is your ticket. Perfect for families, easy on the pace, and unforgettable in its delivery—this is one day you won't want to miss on your Fijian experience.

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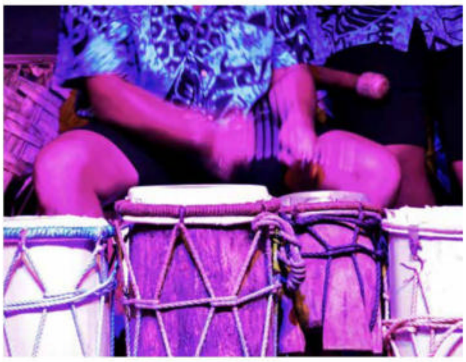


KIA ORANA
RAROTONGA
RAROTONGA

Rarotonga: Culture, History & Handcrafted Heritage

From fearless Pacific voyages to modern-day independence, the Cook Islands welcome visitors with a unique, resilient culture. Rarotonga, the largest island, invites you to step into this history, where landmarks and traditions bring centuries of Cook Islands life into focus.

Epic Beginnings: Polynesian Settlement

The first Cook Islanders were master navigators from the Society and Marquesas Islands, arriving between 200 BC and 200 AD. They traversed the Pacific in vaka (traditional canoes), mapping vast waters from Rapa Nui to Hawaii, South America, Rarotonga, and eventually Aotearoa (New Zealand). These ancient migrations laid cultural roots that persist today in shared Maori language and customs.

Crafting Culture: Traditional Arts

For generations, Cook Islanders have crafted with a purpose, using island resources to make tools, art, and instruments connected deeply to their surroundings.

- Woodcarving: Polynesian carvers honored gods like Tangaroa, the god of sea and fertility, through woodcraft. Today, Tangaroa figures, drums, vaka models, and spears are highly valued as symbols of this art's legacy.
- Tivaevae: Introduced by missionaries, this intricate applique quilting quickly became a community art among women, who gather to create tivaevae linens. Many island accommodations showcase these linens, celebrating the enduring tradition.
- Rito Hats and Accessories: From Penrhyn and Rakahanga, finely woven “rito” hats, fans, and earrings made from treated palm fronds are cherished across the Cook Islands. These items, especially prized as part of locals' Sunday attire, reflect both craftsmanship and pride.

Life in Motion: Dance & Music of the Cook Islands Music and dance are at the heart of life in the Cook Islands. Locals sing with depth and power, whether it’s harmonized hymns at church or chants that fill weddings and funerals with emotion. Festivals throughout the year highlight island pride, where communities bring unique songs and fierce competition. Polynesian string bands add a modern twist, mixing ukuleles carved from coconut shells with electric elements for a distinct vibe in Rarotonga’s restaurants and bars.

Drumming here is iconic—intense, rhythmic, and unmistakably Cook Islands. These wooden drums, often confused as originating in Tahiti, have a heritage entirely unique to the islands.

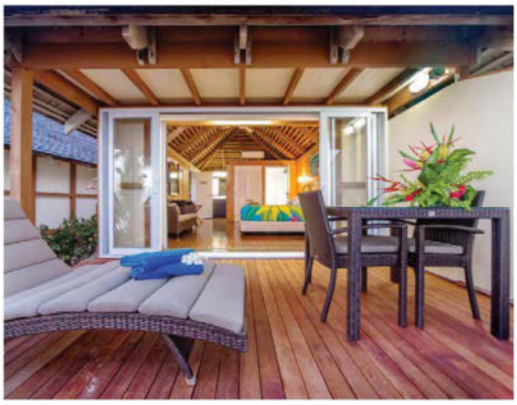
Flavors of Rarotonga

Bold, fresh, and local: that’s the essence of Rarotongan food. Sample ‘ika mata’—raw fish in coconut cream—or the local staple, rukau, a rich, earthy taro leaf dish. Explore the island’s markets and roadside stalls for a taste of these authentic flavours.

Language & Legacy In Rarotonga, English, Cook Islands Maori (Rarotongan), and Pukapukan are spoken, blending the past with the present. Even learning a few Rarotongan words adds dimension to any visit, connecting you with island life through its 13-letter alphabet.

Culture, music, food, and traditions are deeply woven into the fabric of life here, creating an authentic community spirit. While it may not always be visible, Cook Islands culture is thriving and flourishing. It’s not just for tourists; it forms the very foundation of the Cook Islands.

Rarotonga isn’t just a destination; it’s a connection to the Pacific’s living heritage. Whether you come for the culture, history, or art, Rarotonga immerses you in the vibrant story of the Cook Islands.



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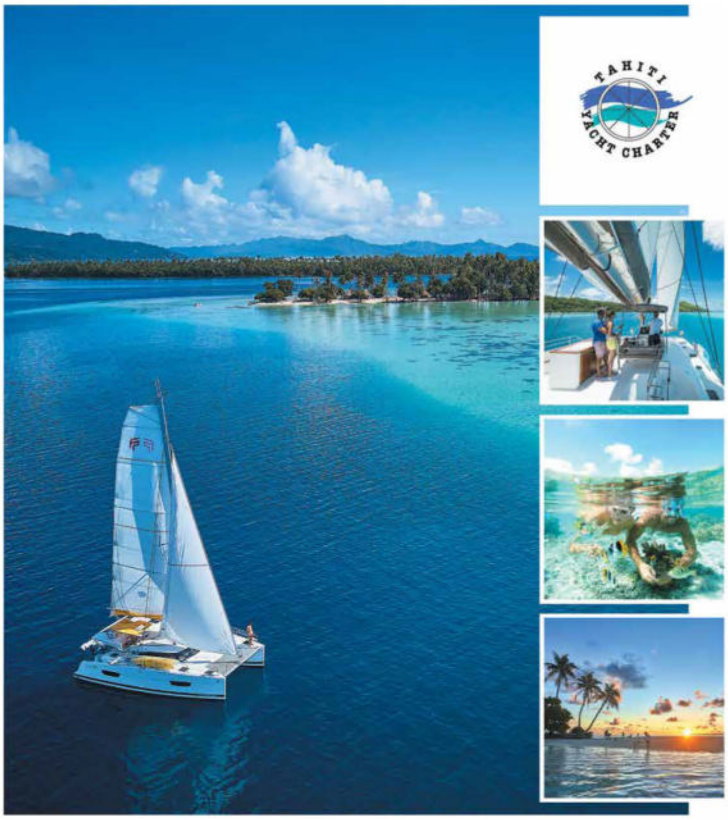
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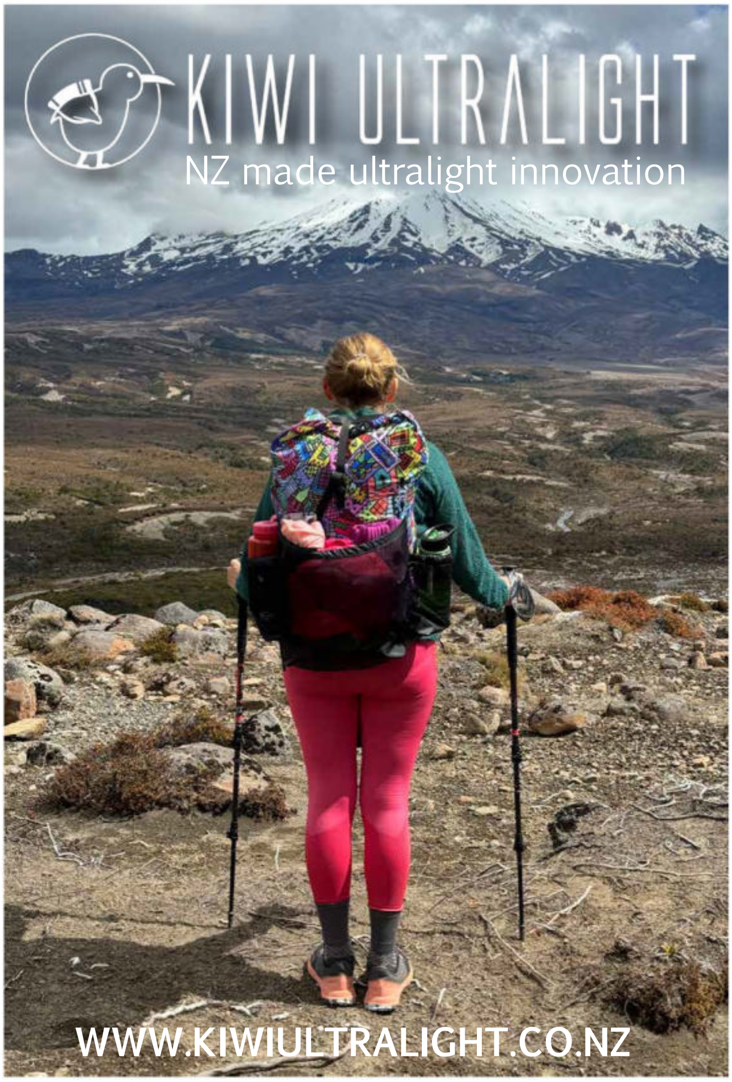

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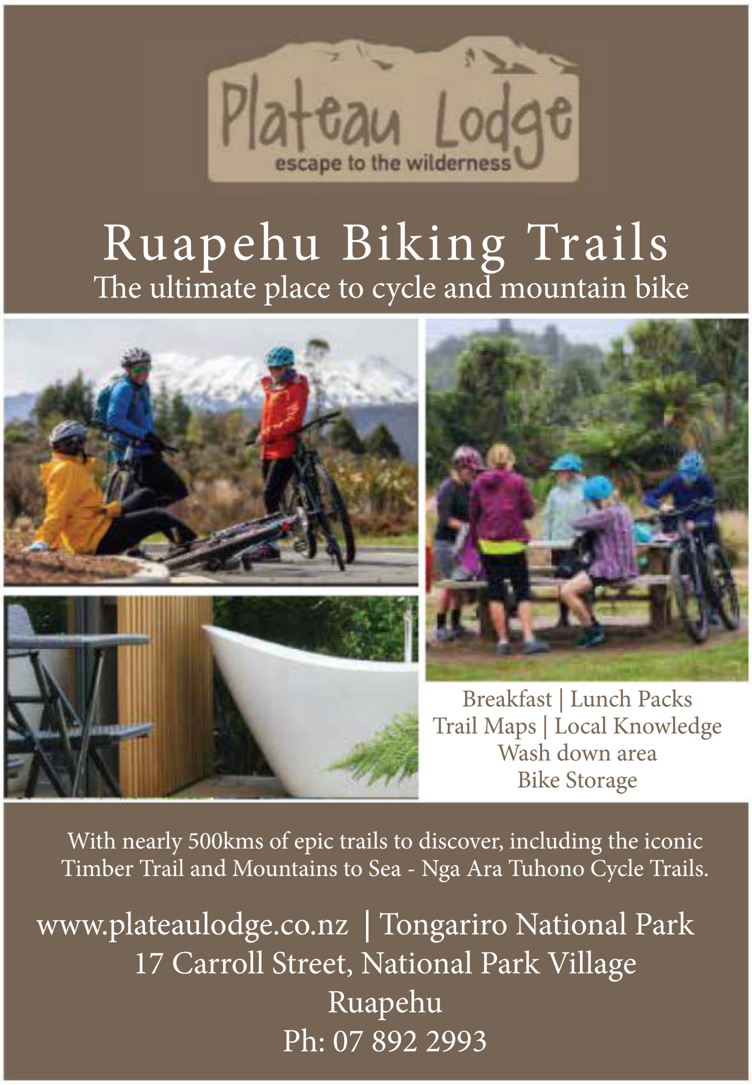

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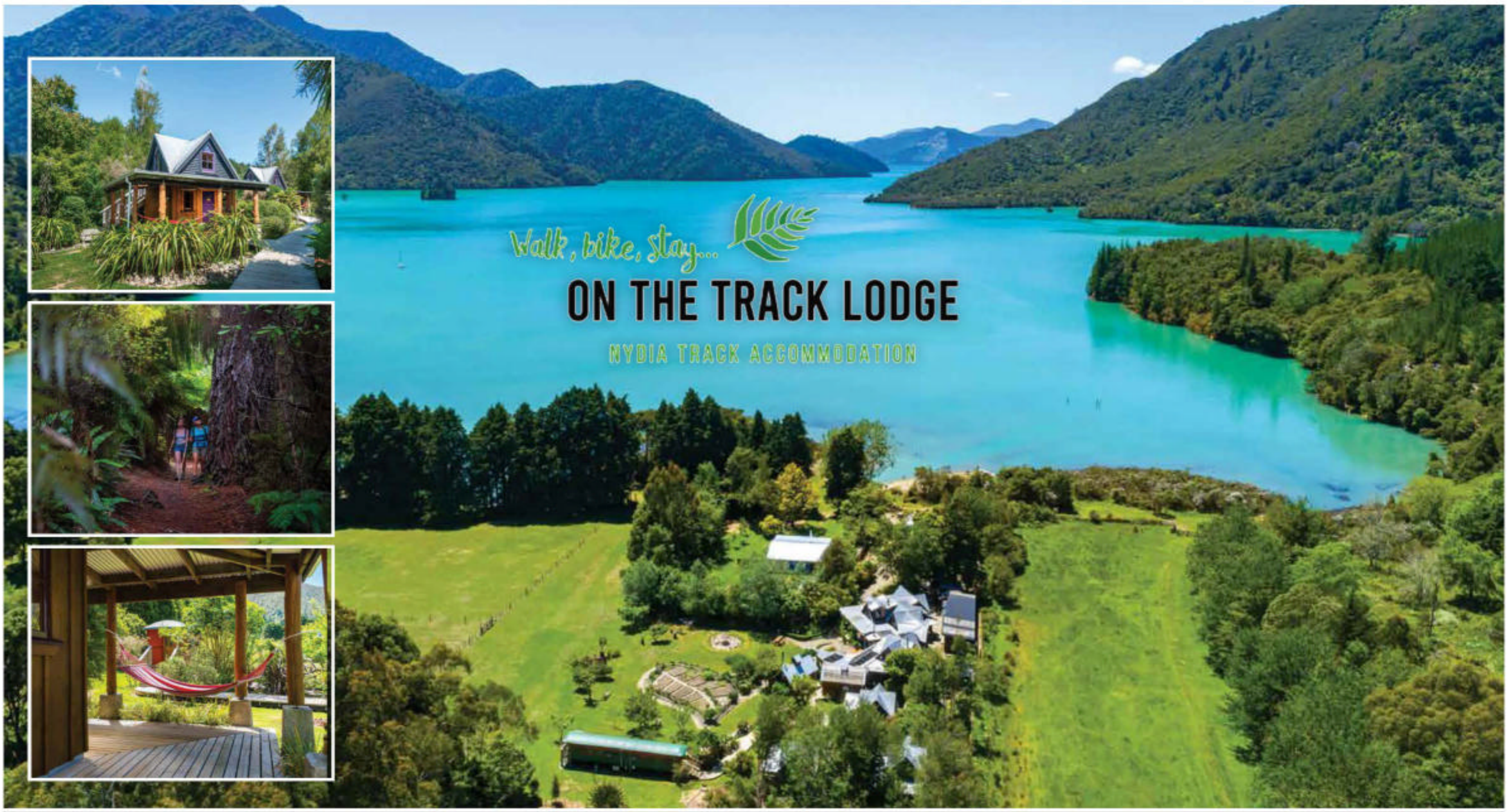

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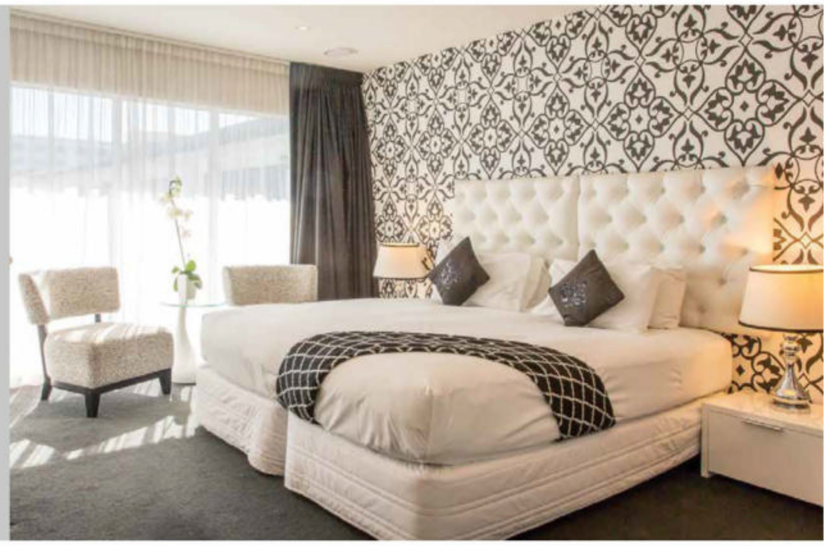

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